

Yemen denies report of Israeli airlift plan

SANAA (AP) — The Foreign Ministry Sunday denied reports that Yemeni Jews would be airlifted from the country by Israel and said any member of the community was free to travel. "All Yemeni citizens, Arabs or Jews, enjoy freedom to travel to any country except Israel," a ministry statement said. The statement described as "totally untrue" a Sunday Times report (see page 2), which said the airlift plans began six months ago and would involve military escort by F-15 fighter jets to clear a path for El Al passenger planes to fly into Yemen. The newspaper said it was not known if the Yemen government was cooperating with the planned military operation. About 1500 Jews live in Yemen, one of the oldest Jewish communities in an Arab country. Sanaa issues passports to the Jews who wish to travel. But the passports are marked valid for any country "with the exception of Israel."

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U.N. envoy holds talks in Tripoli

TUNIS (R) — A senior U.N. envoy had talks with Libya's deputy leader on Sunday about Tripoli's position in its dispute with Western countries over the bombing of U.S. and French aircraft in 1988 and 1989. Vasily Safonchuk, U.N. undersecretary-general for Security Council affairs, said he discussed with Libyan second-in-command Major Abdul Salam Jalloud "how to implement Security Council Resolution 731." The resolution calls for the handing over of men wanted for questioning or trial in the bombing of Pan American and UTA airlines in which a total of 441 people were killed. Mr. Safonchuk said he planned to meet Libyan leader Colonel Muammar Qaddafi before leaving Tripoli on Monday. "I can't make any comment at this stage," the envoy told Reuters by telephone from the Libyan capital, when asked if he had made any progress. Mr. Safonchuk arrived in Libya on Saturday with a message from U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali asking Col. Qaddafi to provide "further clarification of previous Libyan proposals to resolve the controversy," U.N. sources in Tripoli said. (Related story on page 2)

Sudan's Darfur state needs food aid

KHARTOUM (R) — Sudan's western Darfur state urgently needs food aid due to the failure of its crops, a senior aid official said on Sunday. Douglas Lackey, field director in Suva of the charity Save the Children Fund, told Reuters that Darfur, with a population of three million, needs at least 10,000 to 15,000 tonnes of relief aid per month from March. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) have said Darfur's food aid requirements this year are even greater — 275,000 tonnes, or nearly 23,000 tonnes per month. Besides war-torn southern Sudan, Darfur is the area worst hit by years of drought and desertification.

Sudanese assembly opens today

KHARTOUM (AP) — Sudan's military leader Omar Hassan Al Bashir will inaugurate Monday the first session of the transitional, 300-member parliament he has appointed. Lieutenant-General Bashir himself will not be a member of the transitional national assembly. But he has appointed the other members of the junta, all the cabinet ministers, the governors of the country's nine states and other political leaders in the new body. Gen. Bashir has said that this transitional parliament will pave the way for an elected body. But he has not set a time for when elections will take place. The new head of the parliament is retired Colonel Mohammad Al Amin Khalifa, a former member of the Revolutionary Command Council.

Winter Games end; Lillehammer gets baton

ALBERTVILLE (R) — International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Juan Antonio Samaranch formally closed the Albertville Winter Olympics on Sunday. Mr. Samaranch handed a five-ringed Olympic flag to the mayor of Lillehammer, the Norwegian town which will hold the next Winter Games in 1994, in a symbolic gesture at a closing ceremony attended by 33,000 people.

Ukraine seeks release of POWs

NICOSIA (R) — Ukraine's Deputy Prime Minister Konstantin Masik asked Iran on Sunday to help obtain the release of his country's prisoners of war (POWs) in Afghanistan. The Iranian news agency IRNA reported Mr. Masik, in a meeting with Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani in Tehran, said the intervention in Afghanistan by the former Soviet Union in 1979 was "regrettable" and urged Iran to use its influence on the Afghan Mujahadeen to free the POWs.

Sharif Zeid urges citizens' cooperation

Government moves to explain fuel price hike; House schedules debate

AMMAN (J.T.) — The government Sunday moved to explain the reasons that prompted a hike in fuel prices and urged public understanding and cooperation. Parliament scheduled a session to discuss the issue.

Senior officials explained that the increase in fuel prices was the last in a series of measures linked with an economic readjustment and recovery programme agreed with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The government also announced the scheduled departure to Paris of a high-level delegation to discuss the rescheduling of Jordan's debt payments due in 1991, 1992 and 1993 with the Paris Club (see story below).

Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker Sunday urged the public to shoulder the national responsibility and display the spirit of national belonging, especially under the present economic circumstances facing Jordan.

Addressing a meeting attended by Minister of Supply Mohamad Saqqaf and senior ministry officials, Sharif Zeid said the economic conditions should prompt all citizens to show cooperation and exert efforts to con-

front the difficulties impeding the country's progress in all fields, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said.

The prime minister was briefed on the general supply situation in the Kingdom. He urged the Ministry of Supply to ensure sufficient basic supplies to citizens in all regions at current prices.

The prime minister requested the Ministry of Supply to tighten control measures and to deal strictly and drastically with profiteers, Petra said.

Following the meeting, Mr. Saqqaf said the prime minister emphasised the need to maintain the same prices of bread noting that the government would retain the price of one kilogramme of bread for 75 fils.

Referring to the government's decision to increase the prices of first grade gasoline oil, fuel oil and diesel oil, the minister said it was one of the most difficult decisions taken by the government but the government was careful to ensure social safeguards.

The prime minister instructed the Ministry of Supply to keep strict control over prices noting

that merchants' cooperation with the ministry at this stage was essential, Mr. Saqqaf added.

The minister noted that the government would shoulder the difference in price market between the local rates and the international rates amounting to JD 3 per tonne and maintain the same prices of bread.

He called on bakeries to adhere to the prices set by the government and to refrain from using oil to bake bread.

Any bakery found violating the order risks, fines and closure, the minister added.

He said he had informed the bakeries of the government decision and the government's commitment to pay the JD 3 difference in price.

Furthermore, Mr. Saqqaf noted, all tariffs for vehicles transporting passengers as well as the prices of energy and water would remain unchanged following the increase in the price of diesel oil.

He said that the local farmers using diesel oil for water pumping would be compensated by the government.

Referring to compensation to households using diesel oil in



Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker

heating homes the minister said that several committees will be set up to scrutinise information submitted by the citizens before they are reimbursed JD 100 for their diesel oil consumption for heating during 1992.

Several deputies criticised the fuel price hikes during a regular parliament session saying the government had reneged on past promises it would only raise prices of commodities after prior consultation with the House.

In response, the government said it will discuss the matter with the Lower House on Wednesday (see page 3), a day after the departure of Jordan's team to the Paris Club talks.

Almost half of the 80-seat Lower House of parliament members, mainly the Muslim fundamentalists and leftists, oppose the IMF on ideological reasons or because they associate reforms with soaring prices.

Stage set for Jordan's talks with creditors on debt rescheduling

By P.V. Vivekanand

Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The hike in fuel prices announced by the government late Saturday evening comes in line with an economic adjustment and revival programme agreed with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and clears the way for a round of crucial talks with the Paris Club of creditor governments on debt rescheduling.

The Feb. 28 negotiations with the Paris Club will cover payments due in 1992 and the first half of 1993 as well as arrears for 1991, according to an official statement issued late Saturday.

The statement did not provide figures, but economists said the amount involved was around \$1.8 billion of a total of \$5 billion owed by the Kingdom to the governments grouped in the Paris Club. The Kingdom's total foreign debts stand at \$7.2 billion.

The hike in fuel prices as sought by the IMF is indirectly linked with the negotiations since the IMF has to certify that Jordan is following the economic programme agreed last year before such negotiations could begin. The IMF green light will help reduce the payments due in 1992 estimated at \$1.3 billion to about half.

An IMF approval will also enable Jordan for special drawing rights worth \$80 million from the World Bank to help it address the deficit in the balance of payments.

The hike in fuel prices was scheduled to go into effect on Jan. 1, but was delayed in view of the severe snowstorms that hit the Kingdom in the past few weeks.

Meanwhile, the government reassured the public that no more tough IMF medicine was in the offing and that the fuel price hike was the last such measure this year.

"By increasing fuel prices, all economic and monetary measures would be complete for this year and would allow Jordan to settle part of its foreign debts, achieve self-dependence and continue building foreign exchange reserves," a statement issued by the Ministry of Supply said (see story on page 3).

The implementation of the 18-month programme agreed with the IMF late last year was stalled over the delay in increasing fuel prices and officials said the government had tried to hold off the hike until after Ramadan but could not wait anymore if it were to start negotiations with the Paris Club this month and with the London Club of banks and other financial institutions later.

The agreement with the IMF is a modified and updated version of a programme worked out in 1989. Jordan

(Continued from page 4)

Cold front begins today; avalanche reported

AMMAN (J.T.) — A cold front will affect Jordan beginning today, bringing in more rain and snow on hilly areas with an elevation of more than 700 metres above sea level, according to the Department of Meteorology.

The effect of the cold front, which is accompanying a depression centred east of Cyprus, will continue till Tuesday evening, the department said.

The department said temperatures will drop to near zero Celsius and winds will be strong.

As rains fell incessantly on the Kingdom Sunday, an avalanche took place in Al Irak town in Karak Governorate and destroyed 160 fruit trees, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The agency quoted the mayor of the town, Mustafa Mawajda, as warning of more avalanches in the area unless certain measures were taken.

Mr. Mawajda attributed the avalanche to the heavy rains and floods which swept the area over the past few weeks.

A technical committee comprising specialists from the concerned authorities will assess the extent of damage resulting from the avalanche and will draw up plans and studies on ways of preventing its extension or the occurrence of similar incidents in the future, Mr. Mawajda said.

Officials in the governorate visited the avalanche site and supervised an evacuation operation carried out at the site to avoid more losses.

In Deir Abee Saeed, the Jordan Valley Authority (JVA) continued pumping water from the town's well which flooded neighbouring houses.

Officials at the site said more than 4,000 cubic metres of water were so far pumped out of the well, which was built over a water spring. Water is still coming out of the well strongly and flooding near houses, they said.

Mideast talks resume today amid violence, tensions

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — Arabs and Israelis resume negotiations on Monday against a backdrop of Middle East violence and political tensions which threaten the survival of the shaky peace process.

Israel will meet in a fourth round of bilateral negotiations with Syria, Lebanon and a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. Diplomats and officials were expecting a stormy session and some analysts said the talks might even break down.

The fact that all parties agreed to send their delegations here indicated a joint commitment to keep negotiating even though their talks until now have been inconclusive.

The Israeli delegation was on its way to Washington on a chartered air force jet Sunday.

The parties also decided not to be sidetracked by a flare-up of fighting in southern Lebanon, a squabble over Israel's detention of two Palestinian negotiators and Israel's difficult negotiations with the Bush administration over its request for help in bor-

rowing \$10 billion to absorb refugees.

Guerrillas withdrew about 200 of their fighters from the tense Israeli border area after halting rocket attacks against Israel and its "security zone" in South Lebanon (see separate story).

U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, a low-key monitor until now, may be ready to play a more assertive role in the round that opens here Monday provided the Palestinians flesh out their proposal for local self-rule and the Israelis provide a detailed response.

Mr. Baker, in a recent message to Faisal Husseini, a senior Palestinian adviser, said he would like to bridge the two sides' positions. But Martin Indyk, executive director of the Washington Institute, a private research group, suggested Friday that "the time is not right."

Mr. Indyk predicted Mr. Baker would step in only after "everybody has a sense what is the bottom line of the parties."

The negotiations were inaugurated in Madrid after last Octo-

ber's historic Middle East peace conference. Two subsequent rounds of talks were held in Washington but produced little tangible progress.

The euphoria generated by the Madrid encounter has almost totally dissipated. The Palestinians especially are disappointed that peace talks have produced no improvement in the conditions of the 1.75 million Palestinians living under Israeli occupation.

"The Palestinian negotiators are under extreme pressure to show some achievements, or at least a glimmer of hope. The peace camp in their community and in Jordan as well is being undermined by the lack of progress," said an Arab diplomat.

But the Palestinians are not alone in feeling a sense of betrayal.

Israel expected a generous U.S. attitude to its request for \$10 billion in loan guarantees and has been disappointed.

Syria hoped to be removed from the U.S. list of states that support terrorism and has been disappointed.

Israeli ministers warn U.S. not to link loan guarantees to election

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israeli cabinet ministers urged the United States Sunday to stop linking immigration aid to the construction of Jewish settlements in the occupied territories.

Sensitivities were heightened by news reports from Washington over the weekend suggesting that the Bush administration will withhold the aid until after Israel's June 23 election, bopping voters will choose a more pliant government.

"Conditioning guarantees on political issues in Israel is something that demands caution on both sides," said Police Minister Roni Milo, a confidant of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir.

Israel is seeking \$10 billion in loan guarantees from the United States to finance an influx of Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union. The Bush administration is demanding Israel first freeze settlement construction.

Mr. Shamir has opted for a low profile on the guarantees, apparently believing that in this critical phase of negotiations, it is not in Israel's interest to appear publicly anxious.

Unlike most Shamir speeches recently, the prepared text of an address he was to deliver Sunday

to the World Jewish Congress did not mention loan guarantees.

The news reports from Washington, prominently displayed in Sunday's Israeli newspapers, said U.S. officials believe that to grant the guarantees now would boost Mr. Shamir's Likud party in the election.

They said U.S. officials hoped the winner would be the dovish Labour Party under its popular new leader, Yitzhak Rabin.

Mr. Milo said that if U.S. officials, through media leaks, expressed preference for Mr. Rabin in hopes of having him elected, "then in my view the administration will have to wait many years."

Justice Minister Dan Meridor, also a member of Mr. Shamir's inner circle, said he hoped the reports turned out to be untrue. "We will have to wait and see what the administration does," he said.

Any move by the administration that is perceived here as interference could backfire by rallying Israelis around Mr. Shamir. Meanwhile, the issue of loan guarantees has plunged Israelis into a quandary.

While some economists say the country cannot cope with the immigration flood unaided, others argue that it may be the

shock therapy needed for Israel to get its finances in order.

On a political level, the argument is made that bowing to American pressure will send the wrong message to the Arabs: That they need not negotiate with Israel when they can rely on American pressure to extract Israeli "concessions."

Immigration Minister Yitzhak Peretz said: "There is the fear that this time we will surrender to political dictates which will choose a chain reaction in a second or third situation."

Health Minister Ehud Olmert said that if the United States withheld the loan guarantees, it "will have bowed to the dictates of the Arab states and the Palestinians, who are threatening that if loan guarantees are given — and it doesn't matter which ones — they will abandon the peace talks."

The talks resume in Washington Monday.

Mr. Olmert said the early election — in June instead of November — was a demonstration of Mr. Shamir's commitment to the peace process. He noted that the date was moved up because Mr. Shamir lost his parliamentary majority when hardline parties quit his coalition in protest at Israel's participation in the talks.

Israeli soldiers kill 2 Palestinians

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Soldiers shot and killed two Palestinians in separate confrontations in the occupied territories, the Israeli army said Sunday. In occupied Jerusalem, a small pipe bomb exploded at a bus stop in a Jewish neighbourhood and one person was hurt.

There were conflicting reports on Saturday's two shootings. In one incident, troops dressed as Palestinians and using a car with West Bank license plates raided the northern village of Deir Ghansun, Arab reporters said.

The raiders opened fire when they encountered a group of Palestinians scribbling wall slogans and raising a Palestinian flag, the reports said.

The army said an army unit encountered suspicious men armed with axes, knives and chains in the village. "The unit fired at them," the statement said, without explaining what prompted the shooting. The army said one man was killed and one wounded.

Palestinians identified the slain man as Zuber Ghannem, 22, and the wounded man as Nafez Baran, 17.

In the occupied Gaza Strip's Jabaliya refugee camp, soldiers opened fire on three Palestinians as they painted wall slogans, killing Motaweh Mustafah Khalil Haw, 28, and wounding two

others, Palestinian reporters said. One of the wounded suffered a serious head injury, the reports said.

An army statement confirmed the death, and said the soldiers fired after the three Palestinians "tried to stab" the troops.

The deaths brought to 884 the number of Palestinians killed by Israeli troops and civilians since the December 1967 start of the Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation, according to an AP count.

The bomb exploded in Jerusalem's Gilo neighbourhood at about 9 a.m. (0700 GMT) while seven people waited at the bus stop. One person was lightly injured in the arm.

Fifteen Arabs were rounded up for questioning, police said.

Israel threatens theatre

Israel has threatened to close an Arab East Jerusalem theatre used by Palestinian nationalists, police said on Sunday.

Al Hakawati theatre has been the venue for news conferences by both delegates to Middle East talks and Palestinians opposed to the U.S.-sponsored peace effort.

"The police did investigate what took place and since a few things were not legal, they told the people there they will close it

Lebanon fighting subsides

BEIRUT (AP) — On the eve of Arab-Israeli peace talks, fighting ceased in South Lebanon Sunday after a week of violence, but Shiite Muslim leaders called for more guerrilla attacks against Israel.

The leader of Hizbollah and its spiritual mentor addressed a Beirut rally of some 20,000 Shiites to mourn Sheikh Abbas Musawi, who was assassinated with his wife and son in an Israeli helicopter gunship ambush one week ago.

"Our resistance should never stop," declared Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, Sheikh Musawi's successor as Hizbollah's leader.

"The only way to achieve a lasting peace in the Middle East," he said, "is the return of all the Jewish occupiers to the lands from which they originally came."

His remarks were echoed by Sheikh Mohammad Hussein Fadallah, the spiritual leader of the fundamentalist movement.

"Only resistance attacks steer the nation in the right direction," Sheikh Fadallah said.

The calls for violence the day before Monday's peace talks in Washington were at odds with efforts to defuse tensions in South Lebanon, where fighting between

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued on page 5)

Iraqi opposition leaders meet in Riyadh, seek united front

RIYADH (AP) — Fifteen key Iraqi opposition leaders, reportedly including former army officers, met Sunday seeking once again to forge a united front capable of toppling President Saddam Hussein.

Significantly, the closed-door session at Riyadh's conference palace was the first officially sanctioned by Saudi authorities since last year's Gulf war.

That appeared to indicate that the Saudis, who have kept their distance from most of the Iraqi exile groups and especially Iran-backed Shiite Muslim factions, are taking a higher profile in organising efforts to overthrow President Saddam.

Conference sources said the Iraqis gathered in Riyadh included former army officers, but none was identified.

But the meeting was attended by Hajjaj al-Husseini, leader of the Tehran-based Supreme Committee for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI). That is the main Shiite Muslim opposition movement.

Another was Arshad Tewfik, Iraq's former ambassador to Spain who resigned several months ago.

Mr. Tewfik, who claims to have contact with anti-Saddam cells within the Baghdad regime, said most of Sunday's discussions

involved consultations to work out an agenda.

"We're concentrating on rapprochement of views," he said, declining to give any details.

However, Sharjah's Al Khaleej daily said the Iraqi opposition leaders were prepared for a general congress to produce a "formula for... unified political action in cooperation with the governments concerned with the situation in Iraq and the region."

A 10-point blueprint now being prepared provides for the formation of "supreme salvation council" to rule for one year after President Saddam is ousted until elections can be organised.

This formula envisions an integrated state government by Islamic law but acknowledging the Kurds, who are predominantly Sunni Muslims, as an ethnic entity, the daily reported.

The Iraqi opposition leaders will have to overcome considerable difficulties if they are to succeed in patching a cohesive alliance.

Until now, all their efforts have been based on the disparate agendas of the various groups, which range from communists to Islamic fundamentalists. They are variously backed by Syria and Iran.

Mr. Tewfik and others insist that President Saddam can only be toppled from within the ruling

Baath Party and the army.

The Saudis and key coalition partners insist that Iraq must remain united, and that they will not support separatist movements by the 3.5 million Kurds in the north or by the majority Shiites in the south.

Both groups rebelled last spring after the Gulf war and were crushed.

The Saudis have in the past opposed the emergence of a Shiite-dominated government in Baghdad or even a Shiite-controlled enclave in southern Iraq.

To what extent that attitude may have changed now is not clear.

But Sheikh Hakim, a Shiite cleric, was received by Crown Prince Abdullah after he arrived from Tehran Saturday. Sheikh Hakim has said he will also see King Fahd.

Prince Turki Al Faisal, director of Saudi intelligence, attended Sunday's conference, which convened amid new moves by President George Bush to orchestrate President Saddam's downfall.

These apparently included visits earlier this month by Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Director Robert Gates to Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Israel to coordinate efforts to topple the Iraqi leader.

Rabin plays up to hardline Israelis

TEL AVIV (R) — Newly-elected Labour Party leader Yitzhak Rabin showed his right side on Sunday in an attempt to win the crucial centre vote in Israel's June general election.

He reminded Israelis fearing a labour government would cave in to U.S. pressure to return all occupied Arab land and freeze settlements that he began building the settlement which has turned into the first Jewish "city" in the occupied West Bank.

Mr. Rabin also stole the clothes of the ruling Likud Party when he asked whether he would agree to Washington's demand to halt settlements in order to secure badly needed U.S. loan guarantees for immigrant absorption.

"It's desirable that no foreign element get involved in any internal matter of the state of Israel," he told army radio.

As he spoke Likud cabinet ministers were saying the same things, railing against perceived U.S. interference and denying any link between settlement and the requested \$10 billion in loan guarantees.

The change in style between Mr. Rabin and the man he topped as Labour leader last Wednesday, Shimon Peres, has been glaring.

Labour ditched Mr. Peres, its chief for the past 15 years, believed that Mr. Rabin's hardline credentials were a better vote-winner against Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir in a country which has drifted to the right since 1977.

Mr. Rabin is targeting the five per cent of Israeli voters who could swing the election. They fear returning Arab territory and granting self-rule to Palestinians could threaten Israeli security, pollsters say.

But they are equally afraid that Mr. Shamir's insistence on keeping and settling the West Bank and Gaza Strip with Jews could undermine the loan guarantees and Israel's relations with Washington, its biggest ally and bankroller.



Yitzhak Rabin

Mr. Rabin said he opposed what he called Likud's "political settlements," in densely populated Palestinian areas.

"We will halt political settlements out of Israeli considerations whether it is linked to a loan from the U.S. or not," he said, arguing that the money saved would be better spent on creating jobs in Israel.

But Mr. Rabin insisted on continuing settlements for "security" reasons in and around occupied Jerusalem, Golan Heights and Jordan Valley.

"I was always for the principle that it is permissible to build settlements even beyond the green line," he said. Mr. Rabin was armed forces chief in the 1967 war when Israel occupied the territory beyond its 1948 green line border.

"As proof, it was a government headed by me that decided to create the settlement of Maale Adumim," he said referring to the neighbourhood outside occupied Jerusalem which last week became the West Bank's first Jewish "city."

Mr. Rabin said the Golan plateau occupied by Syria and the Jordan Valley were vital to "security."

Mr. Shamir has vowed never to give back an inch of land, contending that the entire occupied territories is both essential to "security" and part of the "ancient land of Israel."

Mr. Rabin, whose party is still trailing in the polls to Likud, said he would introduce self-rule for the 1.75 million Palestinians of the occupied territories within nine months because Israel was committed to do so under the Camp David accords.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Tunisia, Egypt discuss fundamentalism

CAIRO (R) — Tunisian Minister of State for Religious Affairs Ali Chebbi arrived in Cairo on Saturday for talks with Egyptian officials on ways to combat Muslim fundamentalism. "My visit to Egypt is important because there are uniform experiences and visions in both countries on tolerance... and on countering extremism," Mr. Chebbi told reporters at Cairo airport. "We will discuss with Egypt how to make use of its experience in this field," he added. His Egyptian counterpart, Mohammad Mahjoub, said all Arab countries "should cooperate to confront extremist ideas." Muslim militancy has become a hot issue in the region following the rise of the Islamic Salvation Front in Algeria, which was thwarted from power by cancellation of a general election. Both Egypt and Tunisia have banned Muslim fundamentalist groups seeking to apply strict Islamic laws.

Saudis complete air exercises

RIYADH (AP) — Defence Minister Prince Sultan attended the final phase of the largest air manoeuvres in the kingdom's history in northwestern Taif on Saturday, the official media reported. The manoeuvres code-named "South Storm," began three weeks earlier and involved land and air defence units. The conclusion coincided with the first anniversary of the Gulf war. Prince Sultan said his air force had "raised our heads high" during the war and were the most important defence element for the kingdom "after God's protection." Ahmad Ben Mussaid Al-Sudairi, the director of operations, described the manoeuvres as the largest in the history of the Saudi air force in terms of the area covered, the duration of the manoeuvres and the number of forces that participated. He said more than 44 types of planes, including the U.S.-supplied airborne warning and reconnaissance planes known as AWACS, took part with a total of 1,655 sorties. Acting air force commander Abdul Aziz Ben Mohammad Al-Heneidi said in an address at the ceremony that the manoeuvres were conducted safely with no accidents. Manoeuvres would be a continuous affair in the kingdom, the defence minister told reporters. No mention was made as to whether the U.S. composite air wing still present in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia since Operation Desert Storm was involved. A 5,000-strong contingent supported that wing, but U.S. public affairs officers have stopped releasing up-to-date information on their presence.

Saudis form ties with Muslim republics

NICOSIA (R) — Saudi Arabia has established diplomatic relations with the Muslim former Soviet republics of Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, the Saudi Press Agency (SPA) said. It said Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal signed protocols in visits to the Tajik capital of Dushanbe and the Turkmen capital of Ashkhabad on Saturday. Five Muslim republics have emerged from the collapse of the Soviet Union last year. All are being courted by Saudi Arabia, Iran, Turkey, Iran and the United States, countries anxious to fill the power vacuum created by the Soviet demise. SPA said Prince Saud handed Turkmen President Saparmurad Niyazov a message from Saudi King Fahd which stressed Saudi Arabia's "solidarity with Turkmenistan in this important period of its history." And emphasised that "as a Muslim country and nation, we feel fully linked with the peoples of this Islamic region which stood by Islam and the Muslims throughout the past history." He said Saudi Arabia would help the development of Turkmenistan with aid from the Saudi Fund for Development and cooperate in agriculture. SPA quoted Turkmen Foreign Minister Avdy Kuliyev as saying his country had applied for membership in the Organisation of Islamic Conference. In his visit to Dushanbe earlier in the day, the Saudi prince said his country was ready to "take part in the renaissance in Tajikistan," and discussed future cooperation between the two countries.

Storms hit Egypt's northern coast

CAIRO (AP) — Strong storms hit Egypt's Mediterranean coast in the north on Sunday and temperatures were unseasonably low in the rest of the country. A statement by the government's meteorological department said that the worst affected areas were Mediterranean coastal cities where wind speed is expected to reach 63 kilometres per hour and visibility will drop to less than one kilometre. Rising sand is expected to develop into a sandstorm in the governorate of Matruh 30 kilometres northeast of Cairo, the statement said. In Alexandria, 200 kilometres north of the capital, thunderstorms and rain are expected throughout the day and waves will reach as high as four metres. Despite the high seas and strong winds, all seaports and airports remained open. Hassan Al-Aghouri, head of port security, said the port of Suez on Gulf of Suez and the Red Sea harbor of Nuweibeh reopened on Sunday after a one-day shut down. Cairo and Luxor airports, which closed down on Saturday because of poor visibility, are open to traffic, he said. In the southern cities of Luxor and Aswan wind speed were to reach 36 kilometres per hour and sandstorms were expected. In Cairo, temperatures dropped by nearly 10 degrees Celsius (18 Fahrenheit) after a week of spring-like weather with highs in the 20s Celsius (70s Fahrenheit). The meteorological statement said the return of the cold weather was due to a deep atmospheric depression in the Eastern Mediterranean and that it was expected to last until Wednesday.

3 Greeks sentenced to death in Egypt

SUEZ (AP) — An Egyptian court has decided to impose the death sentence on three Greek sailors for smuggling six tonnes of hashish worth \$9 million to Egypt in 1989. Judge Mohammad Kamal Tewfik, who presided the session in the port city of Suez 130 kilometres east of Cairo, referred the case to Sheikh Mohammad Hassan Tantawi, Egypt's mufti or top government appointed cleric. In Egyptian legal practices, this means the court has decided to impose the death penalty although no official announcement has been made yet. Before any death sentence is pronounced, the mufti has to issue his opinion on the case. But the sheikh's role is consultative and his decision is not binding on the court. Suez police arrested Anastasios M. Kontogiannis, a seaman, Kostas Konstantinos, an engineer, and Nikolaos T. Simenon, a boatswain in November, 1989 after they found the hashish hidden inside car tyres in the haul of their boat, the Thanasis.

Ekeus ends talks on Iraqi arms

BAGHDAD (R) — U.N. envoy Rolf Ekeus held a final round of talks with Iraqi government ministers on Saturday to persuade Baghdad to comply fully with plans to scrap its weapons or face serious consequences.

Mr. Ekeus, chairman of the U.N.'s special commission on Iraq, said he expected to hold concluding talks late on Sunday evening with Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz.

"I will conclude my talks tonight. We are leaving tomorrow morning," Mr. Ekeus told Reuters after two days of talks with Mr. Aziz and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Mohammad Saeed Al-Sahaf.

Iraq wants Mr. Ekeus to give a positive report to the Security Council to back up its arguments that an 18-month-old trade blockade imposed after it invaded Kuwait should now be lifted.

Mr. Aziz or Prime Minister Mohammad Hamza Al-Zubaidi is due to go to New York to argue that Iraq has done its best to comply with Gulf ceasefire terms on scrapping its most lethal arms.

Mr. Ekeus was sent to Baghdad carrying a complaint by the Security Council threatening "serious consequences" if Iraq did not obey U.N. resolutions on scrapping its Gulf war arsenals and monitoring its weapons production over the long term.

Iraq maintains that it is cooperating in the elimination of its stockpiles of ballistic, chemical and nuclear weapons programmes but rejects any attempt to monitor what weapons it is producing as a violation of its sovereignty.

There have been periodic clashes between visiting U.N. arms inspectors and Iraqi officials but most U.N. officials say that cooperation with their hosts is excellent.

Mr. Ekeus suggested there were differences between the U.N. and Iraq over both current programme to scrap Gulf war weapons and future plans to prevent Iraq acquiring other weapons.

"Of course monitoring is a very serious concern, as the Security Council said, but that does not exclude there being problems in the short term as well," he said.

He said that it would be nonsense to get rid of Iraq's Gulf war weapons if Iraq is producing other arms and has said that sanctions cannot be lifted unless Iraq allows long-term scrutiny of what arms it is producing.

Iraq, which says it faces an armed threat from Kurds in northern Iraq and Shiite dissidents from the south, argues that defence is a sovereign right and suspects the U.N. of acting as a tool of George Bush, who wants Saddam Hussein overthrown.

Israeli soldiers

(Continued from page 1)

if it happens again," a police spokeswoman said.

"They're still checking what goes on there," she added. Videotapes and phone conversations of Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat have been broadcast there. Israel refuses to have dealings with the PLO, which it brands a "terrorist" organisation.

The theatre stages major cultural events for the nearly two million Palestinians living under Israeli rule. It frequently bouses art exhibits.

Security sources said it also was used by organisers of the four-year-old Palestinian revolt in the occupied territories.

They said "illegal" actions included raising Palestinian flags banned by Israel and planning guerrilla activities.

Southerners return to battered Lebanon villages

KAFA, Lebanon (AP) — For Hanyia Hamade, 76, it was a horrifying homecoming. Her home and her sons were in ruins, riddled by Israeli shellfire after a week of fighting.

She was one of hundreds of refugees who fled Israel's latest military strikes in the region and began trickling back Saturday when the clashes died down.

"Everything we saved for has disappeared," Mrs. Hamade wailed when she saw the gaping shell holes in the walls of her stone house in Kafa.

The interior was devastated — shattered furniture, mounds of rubble, carpets of broken glass. Kafa and the nearby village of Yater, both a few kilometres north of the self-proclaimed "security zone" Israel occupies along the border, were shelled and stormed by the Israelis during a week of fighting.

The Israelis said guerrillas of Hizbollah used the villages for rocket attacks on the Jewish state and the occupied zone.

Residents said only about 10 of Kafa's estimated 250 houses had not been damaged to some degree.

Police say some 10,000 people from 21 villages in the region fled when the violence erupted a week

ago, when Israeli warplanes swooped in to hit Palestinian bases in retaliation for the slaying of three Israeli soldiers.

The Hamades' two-storey, three-apartment mansion was blasted by at least five tank and artillery shells. Torn clothing blown out of splintered wooden closets littered the wrecked bedrooms.

The parents lived in one apartment. The other two were used by their two sons.

One currently lives in Germany and the other fled with his wife and three children to a safer area Wednesday hours before Israeli troops stormed into Kafa.

"We put all our life savings in this house. Where are we going to get money to repair the house and buy new furniture and new clothes?" Mrs. Hamade, yelled at dozens of Hizbollah guerrillas gathered outside her house.

Mrs. Hamade's married daughter, who lives with her husband and five children in a nearby village, beat her face with her hands and pull her hair in a paroxysm of despair when she saw her parents' shattered home.

"Where will my parents live? They have no place to go to. Will my brother and his young children ever find a shelter?" she cried.

Israel said planning to airlift Yemeni Jews

LONDON (Agencies) — Israel is preparing a secret airlift for the 1,500 Jews in Yemen, the Sunday Times reported.

The newspaper said it was not known if the Yemen government were cooperating with the planned military operation, code-named Magic Carpet.

"Many people are planning to leave, but the situation in Israel is very unclear," the Sunday Times quoted Rabbi Ya'ish Yehiya Ibrahim as saying.

Rabbi Ibrahim is the religious leader of about 400 Jews in Yemen, the newspaper said.

A spokesman for the Jewish Agency, the quasi-governmental agency that deals with immigration and absorption, refused to comment on the report.

Immigration officials in Israel

said they knew nothing of any such airlift and that Israeli organisations had no contact with Yemen's Jewish community.

The Sunday Times said airlift operation plans, which began six months ago, include using F-15 fighter jets to clear a path for the El Al passenger planes to fly into Yemen.

The Sunday Times did not say where its information about the airlift plans came from.

But the newspaper quoted Jewish sources as saying they believe the airlift is a political ploy to impress voters ahead of this summer's general election.

The sources argue, the Sunday Times said, "that Yemen, despite being a hardline Arab state, does not ill-treat the 1,500 Jews living there."

Syria says Shamir preparing for war

DAMASCUS (R) — Syria on Sunday accused Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir of preparing for a new war against Arabs and called on the world community to act effectively to stop him.

The official daily Tishreen said Lebanese military operations against Israel's presence in South Lebanon were self-defence while Israel's attacks were "acts of aggression."

"Shamir is threatening and massing troops. He is also announcing he would not return an inch of the occupied Arab lands and would fill it with millions of Jewish immigrants," Tishreen said.

"Peace is impossible without the recognition of the Palestinian rights and withdrawal from all occupied lands. Shamir is in fact preparing for a new war," the Syrian daily said.

"Would the world stand united to counter the war criminal who wants to flood the Middle East with blood and tragedies?" the paper questioned.

Syria, Lebanon and a joint PLO-Lebanon delegation opened bilateral peace talks with Israel on Oct. 30 in the hope the process would lead to Israeli withdrawal from occupied Arab lands and recognition of Palestinian rights.

But three rounds of Arab-Israeli talks had produced no results so far. The fourth round will open in Washington on Monday.

"Israel's aggressions against South Lebanon in the last three days proved again the aggressive policies of the Israeli leaders especially Shamir," the paper said.

Guerrillas have suspended a rocket war on Israel and retreated from frontline villages in South Lebanon under a pact intended to avert massive retaliation by the Jewish state.

Delegation leaves for talks Syrian peace delegates left Damascus Saturday for the next round of talks due to open in Washington on Monday, officials said.

Report: PLO believes Iran involved in Pan Am blast

LONDON (Agencies) — A Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) report has found that Iran, not Libya, ordered the bombing of Pan Am flight 103, the Sunday Times reported.

Scottish and U.S. authorities have charged two Libyan men with the Dec. 21, 1988, bombing which killed 270 people.

The Sunday Times said the PLO secret report "names the bomb maker as a Christian Lebanese member of a radical Palestinian terrorist group... working as a 'freelance' in an operation ordered by Iran."

The newspaper said the Christian Lebanese man is Khaisar Hadda, who is also known as Abu Elias. The Sunday Times did not say if it had seen the PLO report or where its information was obtained.

Bassam Abu Shanif, a senior advisor to PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, told the Associated Press last week that a secret PLO investigation showed involvement of Middle East parties in the bombing.

Mr. Abu Shanif refused to name the parties involved but said Libya was not one of them.

U.S. and Scottish authorities have charged two men, described in the indictments as Libyan intelligence agents, with the bombing of the New York-bound flight.

The jet blew apart over Lockerbie, Scotland, killing all 259 people on board and 11 others on the ground.

Libya, which has denied any involvement in the bombing, has refused to extradite the suspects, Abdul Basset Ali Al-Megrahi and Lamen Khalifa Fhimah.

Libya's refusal could lead to United Nations sanctions against the country.

The Sunday Times said the PLO report does not rule out Libyan involvement.

But, the newspaper said, the report found Mr. Megrahi and Mr. Fhimah were low-level technicians in an operation ordered and financed by Iran's Ali Akbar Mohtashemi, a hardline religious leader and former interior minister.

The newspaper said Mr. Mohtashemi ordered the bombing to avenge the July 3, 1988, shooting down over the Gulf of an Iran Air passenger flight by the U.S. missile cruiser, Vincennes. The captain of the ship has said he believed the plane was an Iranian F-14 fighter.

The Sunday Times said forensic evidence showed the two Libyan suspects held in Tripoli bought clothes in Malta that were packed in the suitcase containing the bomb.

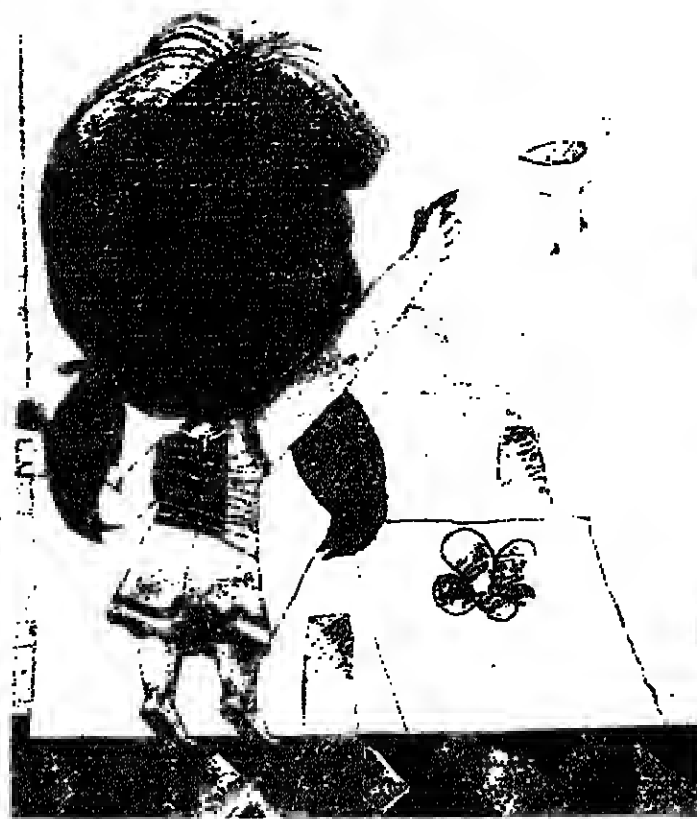
U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali sent an envoy to Libya on Friday with a message asking leader Col. Muammar Qadhafi to clarify his position on the Lockerbie attack.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION	
Tel: 77111-19	
PROGRAMME TWO	
18:00	Le Monde Sous Moun de Jacques-Yves Chusseau
19:00	News in French
19:15	Weekly Sports Magazine
19:30	News in Hebrew
20:00	News in Arabic
20:30	Land of Hope and Glory
21:15	Capital City
22:00	News in English
22:30	Gambler
PRAYER TIMES	
05:01	Fajr (Sunrise) Dhuhir
11:50	Dhuhir
14:53	Asr
17:28	Maghrib
18:38	Isha
CHURCHES	
St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swifich Tel. 511740	
Assembly of God Church, Tel. 632785	
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624580	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 674401	
De la Sade Church Tel. 661757	
Terrestrial Church Tel. 623566	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541	
Anglican Church Tel. 625383, Tel. 628543	
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331	
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 773261	
Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 771751	
Armenian International Church Tel. 685326	
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295	
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 623624, 650353	
Church of Nazareth Tel. 676691	
WEATHER	
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.	
It will be cold, cloudy and rainy, with some expected in hills areas with an altitude of more than 700 metres. Winds will be westerly fresh to gusty. In Ajlun, it will be partly cloudy with showers rains, and winds will be southerly fresh and seas rough.	
Min./Max. temp.	
Amman	2/3
Aqaba	9/14
Desert	2/5
Jordan Valley	7/23
Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 8, Aqaba 18. Humidity readings:	

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS	
NIGHT DUTY	
AMMAN:	
Dr. Mohammad Nuhawi	697925
Dr. Khalid Abo	795342
Dr. Abdul Hadi Tayem	620115
Dr. Ararat Al Ashkhal	602507
Yaqoub pharmacy	661912
Ferdows pharmacy	778336
Al Asma pharmacy	637055
Naroukh pharmacy	623672
Al Salam pharmacy	636774
Yaqoub pharmacy	649495
Shmiciani pharmacy	637660
IRAQ:	
Dr. Ali Shugairi	(—)
Al Shura pharmacy	278253
ZARQA:	
Dr. Khalid Abu Hussein	(—)
Khalid pharmacy	985417

EMERGENCIES	
Food Control Centre	637111
Civil Defence Department	661111
Civil Defence Immediate	661111
Rescue	630341
Civil Defence Emergency	199
Fire Brigade	775121
Blood Bank	891228
Highway Police	843402
Traffic Police	896390
Public Security Department	63021
Hotel Complaints	605800
Pike Complaints	661176
Water and Sewerage	661176
Complaints	897467
Amman Municipality	787111
Telephone Information	771111
(directory assistance)	121
Overseas Calls	010230



The production of more paintings such as these are one of the goals of the festival at the Royal Cultural Centre which began Sunday

Festival promotes reading, creative skills among children

By Saeda Kilani

Special to the Jordan Times
AMMAN — Illiteracy, which is spreading wider in the Arab world and is threatening its future generations, has prompted many specialists, social workers and institutions to join efforts to introduce concrete solutions to this current problem.

The core issues of a week-long festival titled "Child and Reading" inaugurated Sunday at the Royal Cultural Centre (RCC) tackle core issues like needs of children and interaction between them and society. Her Royal Highness Princess Wajdan Ali, writers and teachers from different schools as well as children are participating in the festival.

"About 300 children from different schools will take part daily in this festival," said

Haifa Najjar, a member in the National League to Develop Reading. "The festival will focus on the importance of reading as well as organising meetings and training courses for teachers and children alike," she added.

Many obstacles seem to stand in the way of promoting children's literature, particularly those which arise from the lack of appropriate materials, of books and stories specialised for children, specialists said. This problem seems to stem from a lack of writers and social workers who are acquainted with children's basic needs and aspirations or have learned to speak language, according to specialists.

One of the biggest problems facing Arab writers is their inability or lack of interest in writing children's books from a child's perspective, they said.

"Inside each one of us is a child that needs to be nurtured," explains Farouq Saloum, head of the Children's Culture House in Iraq. "Yet, life's burdens and big responsibilities that confront us when we get older oblige us to forget that child, ignore him and sometimes bury him. Thus, to bring him out again would require lots of effort."

The paintings and the books exhibited at the RCC strongly demonstrate this aspect. Jordanian writers for children are limited and new stories and books that tackle children's aspirations are still lacking, except perhaps for traditional stories that show the courage of our ancient heroes.

Sabri Rubelhat, a researcher on child education and child abuse, said "they (parents) don't really know what they

want from the child or how to treat him/her. They address the child in their language and with their thinking, forgetting that the child has a mind on his own that needs to be nurtured and understood."

With these realities in mind, the festival, sponsored by three private schools and other institutions, stresses the need to promote reading not only among children, but among parents too. This is carried out through the media by guiding parents and showing them methods through which to encourage their children to read in an amusing and beneficial way.

The paintings that were shown, by Jordanian and Iraqi children, reflected their ambition for a better future, without war, that includes beautiful homes and loving parents.

Fuel price increase designed to stem high consumption, generate revenues, statement says

AMMAN (J.T.) — A new rate of fuel prices went into force Sunday in accordance with a decision by the Council of Ministers made upon the recommendation of the Ministry of Supply which said that the move was designed to stem fuel consumption and ensure revenues for the state treasury.

Jordanians realise the magnitude of pressures facing the Kingdom over the past few years and the adverse consequences of these pressures on the country's economic and financial conditions, said a statement that announced the hikes.

In order that Jordan can continue the process of building and attain self-reliance and also confront the external pressures and challenges the decision was taken to increase the prices of certain oil products, the statement

noted. It said that the increases were in line with the country's national integrated programme to implement an economic restructuring plan and reduce the margin of deficit in the balance of payments.

The government decided to increase the price of a litre of first grade gasoline oil to 300 fils, and a litre of diesel oil to 105 fils. It also decided to increase a tonne of fuel used in industrial processes to JD 65, up from JD 41.

The hikes are expected to bring the government JD 30 million (\$44 million) in extra revenue and help trim a predicted 1992 budget deficit of JD 107 million (\$158 million).

In justifying the increase in the price of diesel oil, even that used for domestic heating, the government statement noted that diesel

oil until now has been selling in Jordan at 65 per cent of its international rate. It said that the move was bound to curb diesel oil consumption, noting that trucks, including those with non-Jordanian licence plates, were consuming large amounts of diesel oil for transit operations inside and outside the country.

The statement said that households using diesel oil for central heating can claim compensation from the Ministry of Finance at the end of the year and receive JD100 for the difference in price of the consumed fuel provided that the household's income should not exceed JD 300 a month.

The statement noted that kerosene, used by the majority of limited income groups, and petrol as well as gas were not affected by this decision.

By introducing these measures, the statement noted, the government would have completed economic and financial measures necessary for 1992's plans to achieve self-reliance and replenish the treasury's foreign currency reserves, which in turn can ensure the stability of the national currency and provide the required amounts of foreign exchange for essential purposes.

Consequently, and in light of this decision, the Cabinet announced an increase in the tariff used on the transit and transportation of goods by trucks driven by diesel oil inside and outside the Kingdom.

The statement said that the increase will be 6 per cent over the previous rate and that it will take immediate effect.

Relief campaign for south begins

AMMAN (Petra) — Prompted by the visit His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan made to the southern regions during the height of the snowstorm which hit the country recently, a number of non-governmental organisations have embarked on the first phase of a relief campaign set to provide food assistance to 1,000 families.

The campaign is carried out in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Development. The first phase includes the distribution of food packages, with each one being sufficient for one month for every family which was found eligible for such assistance.

Taking part in the first phase will be the Islamic Relief Agency, the Hashemite Charitable Society, the Middle East Council of Churches, the Pontifical Mission for Palestine, the Manonite Society, the office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, CARE, NEED, Quest and the Young Men's Christian Association, according to Bahaudin Shanabaleh, director of the Islamic Relief Agency's regional office.

Dr. Shanabaleh voiced hope that more non-governmental organisations will support and help finance the coming stages of the project, which will cover some 3,500 families hit by the snowstorms and the severe weather conditions.

Justice minister answers deputy's criticism of Jordanian laws

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordanian laws are embedded in the Kingdom's Constitution and are thus required to undergo both study and change if an alteration is made. Youssef Mbaideen, the minister of justice told deputies during a regular session of Parliament Sunday.

Mr. Mbaideen's remarks came after Muslim Brotherhood member deputy Ahmad Kofahi presented a lengthy list of laws that he claimed were in contradiction to Islamic Sharia and thus needed to be changed.

"The Constitution is the basis for our laws," Mr. Mbaideen concluded without elaborating further.

The parliamentary session, which was attended by 64 deputies as well as 27 members of Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker's government, in-



Youssef Mbaideen

cluding the prime minister himself, was dominated by discussions on regional issues and complaints.

Deputy Abdul Rahman Akour complained about the building of a sexually segregated swimming pool in

the Al-Hassan Sports City in Irbid and asked the minister of youth to explain several appointments he had made.

A group of ministers from Jordan's southern district asked that the headquarters of southern based industries, specifically the potash company, the phosphate company, the cement factory and the Jordanian-Iraqi Transport Co., be transferred to their regional bases.

In a vote of 34-19, the parliamentarians voted to pass the proposal to the government for a final decision.

The decision by the Ministry of Supply to increase the price of some fuels, including gasoline, heating oil for homes and fuel oil for industries, will be on Wednesday's agenda. The debate on the government's decision is expected to come under attack from members of the House.

Industrialists, hoping for additional compromises, again complain about 10 per cent consumer tax

AMMAN (J.T.) — Industrialists have again voiced their strong complaint against the government's imposition of the 10 per cent consumer tax which took effect in 1992 and urged the government to reconsider the step.

They also asked the government to introduce regulations exempting primary goods needed for industry from customs duty.

The message from the industrialists was conveyed to Minister of Industry and Trade Abdullah Ensour at a meeting with members of the board of the Amman Chamber of Industry Sunday. The board members made it clear that the consumer tax, which was originally introduced last November and put into force this year, was adversely affecting the national industry.

The consumer tax is opening the door for foreign products to compete with the new costly local products, thus encouraging con-

sumers to buy imported commodities, industrialists said. The result has been the Jordanian factories will have to lay off workers, further aggravating the unemployment situation in the Kingdom, the board members noted. The board members said that the imposition of the consumer tax would drive investors away from the industrial sector.

For this part, the minister expressed hope that the government would arrange for primary products and industrial equipment to be exempted from customs duty. He said that the government was keen on promoting national industry and would take steps to overcome present obstacles impeding the development of this important sector.

Dr. Ensour last month submitted to the Council of Ministers a three-point plan designed to stimulate local industry and trade sector through granting the pri-

vate sector a bigger role and encouraging free enterprise.

The minister had recommended lifting administrative restrictions and limiting the government's role. He also called for an expansion of the free zones, and industrial cities and open more trade centres abroad to help promote the sale of national products.

The imposition of the tax infuriated the industrialists in November, but it was reported later that they reached a compromise agreement with the Minister of Finance over the issue.

The reported compromise provides for factories to be exempted from duty on primary goods and raw materials used in the manufacture of products and for customs officials to monitor production only through the factory books presented to them without having to station permanent officers at the factories.

Polio immunisation campaign starts today

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Health Ministry today launches a week-long immunisation programme to provide children from one to five years of age with protection against polio, of which tens of cases have already been reported in the Kingdom.

Health Minister Aref Al Bataineh has already reported the matter to the Council of Ministers and announced the campaign at a press conference Saturday in which he said 32 polio cases were reported to have occurred, mostly in the northern and central Jordan Valley regions.

The Health Ministry has assigned its health centres, hospitals and those hospitals operated by the Armed Forces, the Noor Al Hussein Foundation, the Queen Alia Social Welfare Fund,

the Ministry of Social Development and other organisations contributing to the campaign to provide the vaccines free of charge.

The minister said contacts and consultations were continuing with the World Health Organisation (WHO) over this issue. The ministry has already prepared 1.2 million doses sufficient for 600,000 children and was distributing them to all the clinics and health centres involved in the campaign, officials said.

Reports coming in from the various governorates said Sunday that arrangements were underway for the week-long national anti-polio campaign. It is to be followed by another campaign one month later to provide the children with another immunisation dose, the official said.



BOOKWORM SPECIAL — The third exhibition of publications by the University of Jordan's Scientific Research Deanship was opened Saturday on campus by university President Fawzi Ghazaleh. The exhibition includes scientific, literary, historical and documentary books, publications by Bilal Al Sham History Committee, the Water Studies Centre, Hebrew Studies Centre, the Strategic Studies Centre, the Faculty of Agriculture and the Islamic Cultural Centre. A discount ranging between 40 to 50 per cent is offered to visitors of the two-week exhibition.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

King congratulates sultan

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Sunday sent a congratulatory cable to Sultan Hassan Bulqieh of Brunei, congratulating him in his own name and on behalf of the Jordanian people and government on his country's national day. The King wished Sultan Bulqieh continued good health and

happiness and the people of Brunei further progress and prosperity.

British official arrives

AMMAN (Petra) — British Ministry of Foreign Affairs Secretary General David Gilmour arrived here from Jerusalem on a several day visit to Jordan for talks with Jordanian officials.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Art exhibition by Spanish artist Saad Eddouri at the Spanish Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition of paintings by Shaker Hassan Al Said at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation Gallery (10 a.m.-5 p.m.)
- ★ Graphic art exhibition by Sadik Kwaish at Bahadna Art Gallery, Gardens Street.
- ★ Exhibition of photos depicting historical and archaeological sites in Jordan at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition of publications by the University of Jordan's Scientific Research Deanship at the university.

CONCERT

- ★ Concert by the flute and guitar duo of Nice at the Royal Cultural Centre — 8 p.m.

French flute and guitar duo to perform tonight

By Jean-Claude Elias
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The French Cultural Centre in Amman and the National Music Conservatory/Noor Al Hussein Foundation are presenting the "Duo Flute et Guitare de Nice" in a recital at the Royal Cultural Centre tonight at 8.

Olivier Vicari on flute and Luis Saldivia will sail on a repertoire of European works for both instruments from the Seventeenth to the Twentieth centuries with music from Mauro Giuliani, Beethoven, Diabelli, Albeniz, Debussy, Eric Satie and Jacques Ibert. Born in Nice, France Mr. Vicari is not only a talented flutist, but also a leading French musician and musico-

logist. He is always in contact with the greatest French contemporary composers and is considered as a brilliant ambassador of the French flute music abroad.

Mr. Saldivia was born in Chile and studied the guitar in his native country. He met Mr. Vicari in Nice in 1989 and founded the duo with him the next year. Since then, their partnership has taken them to many festivals worldwide and has won them unanimous critical appraisal.

Considering the talents of the performers and the beautiful blend of the flute and guitar sounds which have similarly soft dynamics, the "Duo Flute et Guitare de Nice" concert should please all lovers of classical music in Amman.

Campaign against high prices of red meat draws attention of public, minister

By Nur Sati

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — In an effort to protest against the increased price of the local red meat, the General Federation of Jordanian Women have set up a national committee to devise a plan of action and offer alternatives to consuming local red meat.

The Consumers Protection Committee, which comprises eight voluntary societies, is attempting to act as a pressure group to counter the increasing prices of not only red meat, but also eggs and chicken — the essential foodstuffs that women deal with on a daily basis.

"Our first priority is to ask Jordanian citizens to stop consuming local meat and instead turn to frozen meat and to consume dry vegetables rather than fresh vegetables, which are cheaper commodities," said Dr. Haifa Ghazaleh, president of the General Federation of Jordanian Women. "We have to let the people

know that there are alternative products that they can buy."

The national committee, which is expecting a positive reaction from the public, will conduct their campaign through the mass media to orient the community about choosing substitute commodities.

According to Dr. Ghazaleh, members of the committee met with Minister of Supply Mohammad Saqqaf Tuesday and he agreed to cooperate with them on their campaign. "The minister said he would cooperate with us on our plan and we will be asking the ministry to make a list of all the possible substitutes to the already expensive products," she told the Jordan Times.

The minister earlier made an appeal to all organisations and trade unions to join in a national campaign to steer members of the public towards alternative types of commodities and try to promote the production of local items. Shiam Al Qasbi, president of the national committee,

said that people have begun complaining of unbearable prices. "People who could buy meat once a month now have to resort to buying meat once every six months," she said.

Prices of meat jumped from JD 2.60 for one kilo to about JD 5 or JD 6 just two weeks ago, according to Ms. Qasbi. "With all the social problems Jordan is facing, particularly poverty, we feel it is for the good of the country that we are protesting the high prices," she said.

The campaign is timely, she said, March is the holy month of Ramadan where people consume larger amounts of meat. An official at the Ministry of Agriculture, when asked to comment on the campaign, maintained that "the women want the best quality of meat at the cheapest price."

According to Ibraheem Sheikh, head of the section of sheep production at the ministry, there are four different kinds of red meat in Jordan. The locally produced one, which is considered a luxury

commodity, and three imported ones. "The local meat is not put at fixed prices. It depends on the supply and demand trend," he said.

Jordanians can find all kinds of meat at different prices and they can choose whichever price suits them best," Mr. Sheikh added.

Dr. Ghazaleh said that the committee wants meat sellers to make a profit but not at the obvious expense of the Jordanian public. "We see our role, as a federation and a national organisation in this society, as seeking problems affecting women and solving them," she said. "We must help the public because our role is voluntary. We can do a lot more than the government can."

In a statement, Saturday, Mr. Saqqaf tackled the question of the "unjustified rise" in the prices of red meat. According to the statement, the Supply Council (at the ministry) has decided to offer merchants the chance to import meat for the market to be sold at reasonable prices.

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Peg hikes to knowledge

IT IS not enough for the government to assure the people that Saturday's fuel price hikes are the last such measure they will have to face this year. While it may be good news not to expect any more "negative" surprises in 1992, people are entitled to be in the clear on what to expect next year and the year after, especially since the government is privy to all the details of the IMF-prescribed economic adjustment programme that will have to be executed.

A debate has been going on for quite a while now on the merits and disadvantages of the programme agreed with the International Monetary Fund. Yet, the programme itself, as agreed with the IMF, has never been spelled out. Nor did the government take part in the debate directly. Many leading economists in the country have been urging the holding of a national conference that would review the country's past economic performance, assess its present standing and chart a future strategy. The government at least should tell us its opinion of the idea, if it has one at all.

We do appreciate the fact that Jordan is facing tremendous economic problems and that the management of such problems is a formidable task. We also recognise the fact that the latest hikes were designed not to harm low-income families. But we cannot help but notice that while the whole communist, centralised economic order has collapsed, our state socialist methods are still alive and kicking. The government is still the major investor and employer. The prices of most commodities are fixed by the state. The government, through its consumer societies, still subsidises its civil servants. It continues to finance some failing institutions for no good reason.

This economic mess that we find ourselves in has been due in part to heavy centralisation, and leaving almost everything for the government to do. We see no qualitative changes in the way government functions and we have little faith in the methods that have kept the various sectors, especially the small-scale and the entrepreneurs out of economic planning and execution in the past few decades. Since people are the most important ingredient in the economic process their total involvement is compellingly imperative. That, coupled with our political emancipation and democratisation, makes decentralisation not just the motto of the present era, but its very focal point. Decentralisation is not only important because of its academically-proven value, but because it gives more autonomy to the individual and frees people's hands from the shackles of bureaucracy. Autonomous individuals and institutions, interacting in a free-market society with minimum government intervention, are the basis on which a healthy economy can flourish. The government's role should only be limited to ensuring that no-one should have total monopoly on the provision of commodities or services.

It would certainly be very hard to deregulate and decentralise. This cannot and need not be done in one go, however. With so many mistakes accumulated over the years, such a disentanglement would have to be launched with utmost care, planning and most humanely. But the first step should be a complete and honest description and understanding of the status quo and a clear statement on the hardships, adjustments and accomplishments perceived at each level down to the individual's. People need to know what is expected of them in order to adjust with ease and to be prepared. As the saying goes, a knowledgeable fellow is a hundred times more productive than the most obedient servant.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i Arabic daily Sunday attacked the Kuwaiti government for its repressive policies directed against the Jordanian, Palestinian and Sudanese communities still living in the emirate following the eviction of their majority in the wake of the Gulf war. The Kuwaiti rulers, ever since they came back to the emirate from their hotels around the world backed by the U.S.-led forces, have been exercising all sorts of repression against the minorities living in the emirate; they have imprisoned and tortured people, evicted others and holding some responsible for the Iraqi occupation of their country, said the paper. Even the foreign maids are now victims of a campaign of rape and humiliation and all their human rights are violated without any voice being raised in the West to denounce such actions, the paper continued. The isolationist rulers of Kuwait are determined to fight all that is Arab and Muslim and to commit all that which is shameful and can only serve the interests of the colonialist powers to whom it owes its existence in the Gulf region, said the paper. It said that the Kuwaiti rulers who had fled their country half an hour before the advancing Iraqis, are taking revenge upon the innocent and the defenceless population of minorities in the emirate, regardless of any norms and unhindered by any moral or human considerations.

BEFORE DEPARTING for Washington, the Jordanian and Palestinian delegations to the fourth round of peace talks said that they would be seeking an end to the Israeli settlement programme so as to continue the talks with the Israeli side, said Sawt Al Shaab daily. Should the Israelis persist in their position and refuse to stop the settlement programme, the delegations said, they would turn to the co-sponsors of the peace negotiations to deal with the matter and force the Israelis to comply with the requirements of peace, according to the paper. The daily said that the new round of talks will place the Americans face to face with the real test of whether they are willing to force Israel to comply with the international legitimacy or not, especially as the United States has been claiming that it considers the settlements as an obstacle to peace. At the same time, it should be noted that the Americans and the Israelis are still negotiating over the loan guarantees for the Jewish state to build more settlements, and Israel has not yet lost hope of getting the guarantees. It said that if the United States is serious about the peace process, it must not waste any more time but should force the Israelis to comply with the peace requirements and thus help the peace negotiations to achieve real progress.

Weekly Political Pulse

Once bitten and never shy?

By Waleed Sadi

In retrospect, the small and ineffective Arab frays across the Arab-Israeli armistice lines ignited a chain reaction of events that led to the disastrous 1967 Arab-Israeli war. It will be remembered that the government of former Israeli Prime Minister Levy Eshkol had seized upon the opportunity of such minor individualistic attacks to mobilise his country's military machine on the Syrian border in an openly menacing posture that necessarily led to an Arab reaction in the form of an Arab countermobilisation. Then everything broke loose when Israel launched its infamous sneaky attack against Egypt, Syria and Jordan. Of course, the entire Arab World, especially the Palestinian people are still suffering from the devastating and disastrous consequences of that war that should have never been ignited when the Arab side was ill prepared for it. But this is old history now, or almost old history, had the Arab side learned something from it.

Almost the same scenario occurred in the early 1980s when "disturbing" Arab commando and Katyusha attacks against Israel, in the north, gave Israel a pretext to do what it has always wanted to do, namely, to invade Lebanon in 1982 in a bid to route out the well entrenched PLO forces there. That round of war between Israel and Lebanon was also catastrophic in terms of its consequences for both the PLO and the Lebanese people even though the Israelis walked out of the battle fields there with a bloody nose as well. Yet, on balance, and as usual, the Arab side was the bigger loser.

Now we see almost the same thing happening when salvos of rockets fired by Hizbollah forces into northern Israel precipitated or rather gave an excuse for Israel to invade once again southern Lebanon and wreak death and destruction in its path, similar to

the 1982 invasion. To be sure, the Lebanese people, especially the Hizbollah forces, had offered stiff resistance and caused heavy casualties on the invading Israeli army. Yet, it is conceded that the Lebanese fighters, whether from the Hizbollah side or from the general population, were no match for the massive Israeli war machine. At the end, the balance sheet of the latest round of fighting will most probably show that the Arab side was on balance the bigger loser once again.

To be sure, there is nothing inherently wrong with the Arab guerrilla attacks against Israel, provided they are part and parcel of the greater Arab military preparedness. The trouble with the pre-1967 Arab guerrilla incursions into Israel, for example, lay in the fact that they were not only uncoordinated with the standing Arab armies, but often stood on the opposite sides of the fence. At the end, the Israeli aggression in 1967 caught the Arab armies unprepared. The same can be said about the pre-1982 guerrilla and rocket attacks against Israeli targets, both military and civilian, in the north of the country. At the end, the Lebanese and the various guerrilla and militia forces there were left literally on their own to fight back the colossal Israeli invasion.

In both situations, i.e., the 1967 and 1982 wars, Arab masses were steaming with rage and frustration over the inaction of the Arab armies bordering Israel on different fronts. So they precipitated conditions that led to war, naively believing that once the Arab forces are cornered and forced to fight, they will deal Israel a defeat that it will never forget. Those were cases where emotions ran wild and ahead of careful calculations and preparedness. Those were wars when the unorganised Arab fighting forces bit more than they could chew.

This time around, the Hizbollah fighting forces were not expected to sit idle by the wake of the premeditated murder of their spiritual leader Abbas Musawi who, with his family, was gunned down by Israeli helicopter gunships in broad daylight. A Lebanese reaction was natural and logical. As a matter of fact, Israel was the first to anticipate a Lebanese reaction and had therefore hurried not only to prepare for it but also to capitalise on it. The Israeli prime minister was counting on Western sympathy in view of the fact that the Hizbollah movement was often accused of being the mastermind behind the taking of many Western hostages.

Mr. Shamir was also in the midst of elections that could have cost him his head. He therefore, wanted to sound and act tough against the enemies of his country, especially in the face of Ariel Sharon's wild accusations that Shamir has grown soft in his old age!

Yet, all the Arab people who have sympathy with Hizbollah's call for revenge over the killing of Sheikh Musawi and his wife and son, not to mention the scores of others who were murdered with them when the Musawi convoy was attacked a few days ago, may have wished, after the experiences of the 1967 and 1982 Arab Israeli wars, that another method was resorted to avenge the killing of Musawi without giving Israel another excuse to engulf southern Lebanon in another devastating war that caused tens of thousands of Lebanese to flee their homes and towns. The salvos of Katyushas that showered northern Israel seemed once again, to have been carried out without any coordination or consultation.

That is why more and more voices within Lebanon and outside it are calling on Hizbollah to cool it before things get out of hand.

King Fahd to announce early move towards democracy

By Youssef Azmeil
Reuters

RIYADH — A year after the Gulf war, King Fahd of Saudi Arabia is widely expected to announce a significant move towards democracy on Monday.

The King has pledged to announce the rules for setting up a "consultative council" by the end of the month. Diplomats expect him to do it on Monday, the 10th anniversary of his accession.

"It is a sure sign that the disruption caused by the war with Iraq is over. The kingdom has emerged in good economic and political shape and is now ready for modest change," a senior western diplomat said.

"It will be seen as crowning 10 years of tremendous achievement. Very few countries have seen such a transformation to modernity in such a short time and with so little trouble," another said.

Change was widely predicted after the Gulf war, which ended Saddam Hussein's occupation of Kuwait but exposed the kingdom's previously insular citizens to unprecedented western influences.

But the pace appeared to be faltering for a while due to a Muslim religious backlash in a country that is home to Islam's holiest shrines, diplomats said.

The king's announcement is not likely to be radical. He has said the council will assist the government, a strong hint that it will have no veto power.

The general view is that its members will be chosen to represent a wide sample of Saudi opinion. Direct elections do not look



M. KAHIL

probable, the diplomats said. King Fahd said in a magazine interview last week that the council "will be a kind of partnership between the base and the sum-

mit. It will include a large number of citizens whose views we will seek. It will also back up the Council of Ministers..." "It members will be from

threat from the right (religious fundamentalists). The liberals would like more, they will be happy with what they'll get," one western diplomat said.

that encouraged the government to go ahead in setting up the consultative council. "The government is in control we don't believe there is a serious

among the best citizens and of high intellect... they will look into matters that need study and wisdom," he said in his clearest explanation so far of the role of the new council.

The diplomats said the decision to go ahead almost 20 years after the council was first promised was a significant sign of confidence by the cautious Al Saud ruling family.

The Gulf crisis and its aftermath prompted unprecedented rumblings of discontent and public debate in the kingdom on democracy and issues of religious orthodoxy.

Diplomats said at least three petitions were submitted to the authorities, one by liberals seeking greater freedoms and two by zealots seeking a return to the country's roots in the strictly puritanical Wahhabi tradition of Islam.

They reported agitation in the mosques — the latest example being sermons and leaflets opposed to a planned share issue by one of the kingdom's big banks. Zealots regard all banking as based on usury, and therefore contrary to teachings of Islam.

The share issue was delayed, but when it eventually came to market 700,000 of some 800,000 potential investors over 15 years old applied for shares.

It was oversubscribed eight fold in what one banker described as a referendum that went strongly against the zealots.

Diplomats were a bit more cautious. They said the investing public was not necessary representative of all Saudis, but that the rebuff to the zealots was probably part of the background

Buchanan campaign causing concern overseas

By Irwin Arieff
Reuters

WASHINGTON — Conservative columnist Patrick Buchanan's presidential candidacy is triggering early warning alarms in world capitals as foreign leaders see the possibility of a fundamental shift in U.S. ties with other nations.

Mr. Buchanan's "America first" campaign envisions a major scaling-back of U.S. involvement in other nations' problems and more aggressive efforts to block imports from countries that put barriers in the way of American goods.

Japanese Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa was the first foreign leader to express concerns publicly when he predicted on Wednesday that Mr. Buchanan would not gain nationwide support in his bid for the Republican presidential nomination.

Mr. Buchanan took that to mean Mr. Miyazawa was backing President George Bush and told him to keep his nose out of U.S. affairs.

"We are fed up with Japan's interference in our internal affairs," he told a group of fellow conservatives. "I don't believe in Japan-bashing of any kind... but just as they want to make Japan first, I want to make America first."

Political analysts give Mr. Buchanan no chance to beat Mr. Bush. But they predict the president will have to move to the right on some issues to blunt the challenge from ultra-conservative Buchanan, a well-known political commentator and former White House speech writer who never ran for public office before.

While foreign leaders generally try to avoid comment on U.S. domestic matters, the concerns aired by Mr. Miyazawa are echoed by others. Diplomats in

Washington have been closely monitoring and reporting back to their capitals on what one termed a "clear danger of isolationism taking hold in the United States."

Mr. Buchanan's surprisingly strong showing against Mr. Bush in Tuesday's first-in-the-nation New Hampshire primary has riveted attention on him both inside and outside America.

Mr. Buchanan's "America first" campaign envisions a major scaling-back of U.S. involvement in other nations' problems and more aggressive efforts to block imports from countries that put barriers in the way of American goods.

But apart from his strong opposition to the president's handling of the economy, there has been little focus on his views on other issues.

"Mr. Buchanan's stands on major foreign policy matters are in sharp contrast to Bush's. After the U.S.-led military intervention in the Gulf war — which Mr. Buchanan fervently opposed — Mr. Bush began to speak of a "new world order" in which the United States would work with its allies for peace and to foster world democracy.

Buchanan said on Thursday he sees the new world order "as involving a diminution of American sovereignty and a loss of our right to decide to these international conglomerates like the EC (European Community), which I

don't want to see happen to my country."

He is wary of world financial aid organisations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and U.S. Export-Import Bank because they foster development that helps overseas businesses compete against U.S. firms, jeopardising domestic jobs.

And he says he would eliminate most foreign aid because the money could be put to better use domestically.

"I don't think the American people should be required to subsidise the building of infrastructure halfway around the world when our own infrastructure is in the process of collapse," he told the conservative activists.

Stage set for debt rescheduling talks

(Continued from page 1)

dan performed well in line with the 1989 agreement, but the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, which triggered the Gulf crisis and war, threw the accord into disarray, prompting updating and modification.

"The agreement is aimed not merely at cutting foreign debt," said a senior official. "It also involves reducing the deficit in the budget and addressing the balance of payments problem as well as reviving the economy and restructuring it," the official added, reaffirming the pledge made by the government to Parliament while presenting the 1992 budget late last year.

Finance Minister Basel Jaradneh is to lead a high-level delegation to the talks with

the Paris Club on Feb. 28. The delegation will include Planning Minister Ziad Fariz, Central Bank Governor Mubammad Saeed Al Nabulsi, Central Bank Deputy Governor Michel Marto and Finance Ministry advisers.

Diplomat sources have affirmed that most Western governments had signalled their readiness to reschedule the Kingdom's government-to-government debts but it was mostly up to the London Club members to decide their own course of negotiations.

"Jordan will be on its own when it comes to discussions with the London Club," commented a Western diplomat. "This is an area where the governments can be of little help."

key weapons technology to Iran and others.

He also calls for digging a trench — which he has dubbed "the Buchanan line" — along the U.S.-Mexican border to keep out illegal immigrants.

He said on Thursday that he would use U.S. leverage to prevent European governments from subsidising development of a new

Airbus plane in order to protect the market of the Boeing Co.

"If I am elected I will call up the Europeans at that first little economic summit we have, and I will say, 'boys, we are not going to let you, with subsidies, bring down the company that built the planes that kept Europe free (in World War II)'" he said.

"They will not do it."

LETTERS

An empty charter

To the Editor:

A few weeks ago, a Lebanese friend of mine sent me some photographs showing destruction and total mess in the streets of Beirut. What makes me feel real sorry for her now is that she attached this touching note to the photos: "Dear Sulaima, the war is over. The war which lasted for nearly 16 years is over with all its ugliness, hatred, brutality and destruction. Next year, beautiful buildings, playing grounds and children's parks will replace the destruction. Awaiting your visit to our beloved Beirut, Mona."

I just can't imagine how disappointed and horrified the Lebanese are right now because of the renewed Israeli assault. The Israeli brutality won't only stop the rebuilding of Lebanon, it will also destroy people's lives and dreams of a better life.

It's weird that the U.N. can't do anything but issue condemnations. If the situation continues like this then Israelis are expected to do anything anywhere. Something urgent, just and responsible must be done, or else more suffering and humiliation will prevail.

The Human Rights Charter is being read, typed and taught thousands of times. Isn't it high time some measures were taken and human rights were applied in reality?

Suleima Kayyali,
Amman, Jordan.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

Kuwaitis are 'treating us like animals'

By Jack Kelly

KUWAIT CITY — One year after liberation, hundreds of foreign workers are being beaten and raped by Kuwaiti citizens and soldiers.

Fifteen-year-old Amena Serap still vomits and urinates blood weeks after being punched repeatedly by her Kuwaiti employer.

And she's one of the "lucky" ones, diplomats say. Freda, 20, is pregnant after being raped by her Kuwaiti boss. "It wasn't like this before the war," says Marife Yezoon, 31, who ran away from her employer after he tried to rape her. "The Kuwaitis are now treating us like animals."

Many bruised, bleeding and pregnant women, recruited by Kuwaiti employment agencies from other nations as housekeepers and nannies, take refuge in local embassies. As of Thursday: 172 women in the Philippines embassy, some with faces so swollen their eyes are shut. Perhaps a dozen more runaway housemaids arrive daily. Three-fourths of the women have told embassy officials they've been sexually assaulted. One badly cut and bruised woman said her Kuwaiti boss had thrown her out of a two-story window.

69 women hide in the Sri Lankan embassy with more arriving daily. As many as six sexual assault cases are reported each day and at least one pregnancy a month, officials say. Several dozen women hide in the Indian and Bangladeshi embassies with up to 20 more arriving daily, officials said.

"What can we do?" asks Wica Ramasinghe, labour secretary at Kuwait's Sri Lankan embassy. "There is no protection for these women. They are being treated like slaves. We can't leave them with the Kuwaitis."

Kuwaiti officials angrily deny the women are being abused — as they did when the rapes were first reported by USA Today a year ago — and tell outsiders to butt out.

"Kuwaitis under the constitution have the right to criticize U.S. but not the foreigners," says Interior Minister Ahmed Hamoud Al Sabah. "Foreigners ought not to interfere."

Adds former Planning Minister Suliman Mutawa: "There's an element of truth in some of the mistreatment. But the rest is exaggerated, very much exaggerated."

U.S. embassy officials here say they're pressing Kuwaiti officials on behalf of the women, and some U.S. military personnel have been giving food to those at the Philippine embassy.

The 685,000 Kuwaiti citizens long have depended on foreigners to support their oil-rich lifestyle. The foreign worker population, 1.2 million before the Iraqi invasion, is down to 600,000.

Psychologists can't explain the rapes and beatings, which intensified after the Iraqi invasion. Some say they're the result of months of frustration and anger that Kuwaitis wanted to strike out at the Iraqis during the war but were unable to. Now they vent their anger against those who can't fight back.

"Next year will be worse," says psychologist Fawzeeyah Al Durai. "The people still haven't gotten it out of their system."

Others say the women are just easy targets for sexual abuse because Kuwaiti police rarely believe the women. Many women have told officials that they've been

raped in police stations.

Tuesday, an angry Kuwaiti woman stormed into the Sri Lankan embassy compound, grabbed her crying housekeeper who had taken refuge there, and pulled her out by her hair as two Kuwaiti police officers turned their backs. Other housekeepers grabbed the woman's free arm but were slapped by the Kuwait woman.

Also this week, a Kuwaiti woman wrote to a newspaper complaining that her husband is "fond of servants," saying she has found him sexually assaulting a woman. But the unidentified Kuwaiti said she will "stand against" the servant's complaints.

"We have no rights here," says Salbazon Deaziz, 21, who was recently locked in her room, then raped by her Kuwaiti employer. "We were told this country is rich and conservative from Islam, but they don't know how aggressive Kuwaitis are. Never mind our money, just please send us home."

That appears unlikely. Under Kuwaiti regulations, a woman can only return home with the permission of the agency holding her passport and travel papers. So far, the Sri Lankan embassy has been able to negotiate the release of only 50 women — sent home at its own expense.

Sri Lankan, Indian, and Bangladeshi officials said this week they had stopped recommending that their citizens travel to Kuwait in search of work. The Sri Lankan embassy displays pictures of housemaid who was beaten and severely burned with a cigarette and had her hair cut off by her Kuwaiti employer.

The bans follow a similar 1988 decision by the Philippines gov-

ernment to prohibit agencies from recruiting women.

Kuwaiti agencies — illegal under a rarely enforced law — charge several thousand dollars to supply a housekeeper. Agencies say they get around the Philippines ban by advertising in Manila newspapers and radio for jobs in Bahrain or Qatar. Many women arrive and then are told they're going to Kuwait, usually on two-year work contracts for about \$125 a month.

At least one popular Islamic priest, Abdul Aziz Habeeb, has warned Kuwaitis of their "hypocrisy" — speaking out against Kuwaiti women raped by Iraqi soldiers during the country's seven-month occupation but turning a deaf ear to charges that Kuwaiti men are raping foreign workers. "Some Muslims are very bad to the women and are trying to cover themselves in Islam," says economist Abou Ali Jaffar, 30, who's trying to hire Filipino housekeepers who are hiding in the embassy compound.

Their warnings are expected to do little. Foreign workers are bracing for more violence after the stabbing death of a member of Kuwait's ruling family by a Filipino housekeeper.

Lourana Crow Rafael, 44, is accused of murdering Sheikh Latifa Abdullah Al Jaber Al Sabah last week in Cairo after she refused Rafael's request to travel to the Philippines. Kuwaiti and other Arab newspapers are calling the foreign workers untrustworthy, and even branding them as prostitutes.

"It is not safe to be in Kuwait anymore," Ms. Saray says. "It is better to be poor and safe" — USA Today.

Parents have a right to learn

By Dr. Marisabel T. Abu Jaber

Parenthood is one of the easiest jobs to get, but one of the most difficult to perform. Parents rarely get any training. They are expected to know what to do instinctively. It is difficult to understand that this, one of the most critical jobs in shaping the society, does not require minimal standards of education.

Preparation for parenthood is basically learned from observing our own parents or significant ones, such as relatives or friends in action. Many of us remember thinking: "When I become a parent, I will raise my kids very differently from the way they raised me. I will never compare my children, or pressure them. I will listen and talk to them." Yet, we often think and behave the same way our parents did. That is how parenting behaviour gets passed on from generation to generation.

Even those of us who remember being raised by warm, loving and competent parents, find that their methods are not always adequate to meet the challenges of our changing society. We find ourselves raising and preparing our children for an uncertain world about and for which we can only

guess and wait.

Parents want to do their best in raising their children, but many times they do not know how to proceed. Misunderstandings and lack of information are some of the most common reasons behind this fact. We hear parents saying: "We wish we had known what to do years ago. We did not know one could learn how to become a parent. We thought that just came naturally — all one had to do was love one's kids." While loving is crucial to effective parenting and is one of the strongest bonds in human life, love alone does not make one a competent parent any more than love of children makes one a good teacher, or love of art makes one an accomplished painter. They all require education and practice.

Parents need guidance. They need to know what they can do and what they should not do in dealing with their children. In some homes, parents are still using physical punishment as their standard child training method. Those in charge seem to feel that this teaches respect. What it teaches is fear from respect — anger and resentment. Punishment might bring a child to do what you want him to do. But what is learning about self-discipline? Parents can be helped to recognise alternative methods for

disciplining a child.

Parents need knowledge. Few parents know and understand the basis of child development. Psychologists, counselors, pediatricians, educational specialists, all are taught child development except parents. Thus, it is fair to say that they do not understand normal development. Where are they expected to learn it? Parents do not receive formal preparation to become parents. Once parents realise that a bothersome behaviour at a specific age does not necessarily mean their child will end up in a rehabilitation centre, they are better able to accept and effectively deal with that behaviour. Parents very often worry about their teenagers' behaviour. Most teenagers try to establish their own identity by wearing their clothes and hair in ways that are acceptable to their friends not to their parents. If such parents are aware of the developmental needs of the adolescent as an individual, they will be better prepared to deal with the situation.

Parents need parenting skills. They are not only their children's first teachers; they are their children's most important teachers. Parenting and teaching require certain skills. We often ask children if they have received any sex

education from their parents, and the usual answer is "no." Most parents want to educate their children but they are often uncomfortable and afraid that they do not know how. Thus, parents need to work at being "approachable" and credible not only about sexuality but about everything — money, family relationships, school, friends, drugs. They need to develop a range of parenting skills, such as communication, problem-solving, decision-making, encouragement skills which enable them to become competent educators for their children.

If we, specialists, schools, community organisations, focus our efforts, knowledge and expertise in preparing parents for their important role, we will go a long way towards achieving our goal of preventing problems rather than having to deal with them. Prevention is based on knowledge, correction on lack of knowledge. Parents can be helped in their task of rearing well-adjusted, healthy children. They want and need that guidance and support.

The writer is a counselor at Al Maw'el, The National Centre For Psychological and Educational Consultation, Amman.

She contributed this article to the Jordan Times.

Energy from wind and sun

Karl Zawadzky

BOON — Solar energy and the utilisation of wind power are acquiring an ever greater importance. Consequently, the German government has been promoting corresponding research and development schemes for some years now. The scientific-technical standard achieved so far gives rise to the hope that, within a relatively short time, complete systems and individual components will have reached the application stage. Now this technology is to be tried out in a large-scale experiment over a number of years in the climatic, energy-economic and organisational conditions of the Third World.

By means of this major project, the development of universally applicable technology and relative deployment concepts are to be stimulated, and further information obtained on the performance level of the installations and the problems which might still exist. By means of this promotion, the Federal Research Ministry in Bonn is even inviting potential users of solar energy and wind power in the Third World to cooperate in the test-phase of the installations. In collaboration with German partners, they will be able to set up and operate installations of this type in suitable places. At the same time, this promotion is to strengthen industrial cooperation between Germany and the partner country in question in the Third World. Technology transfer is an integral part of the programme.

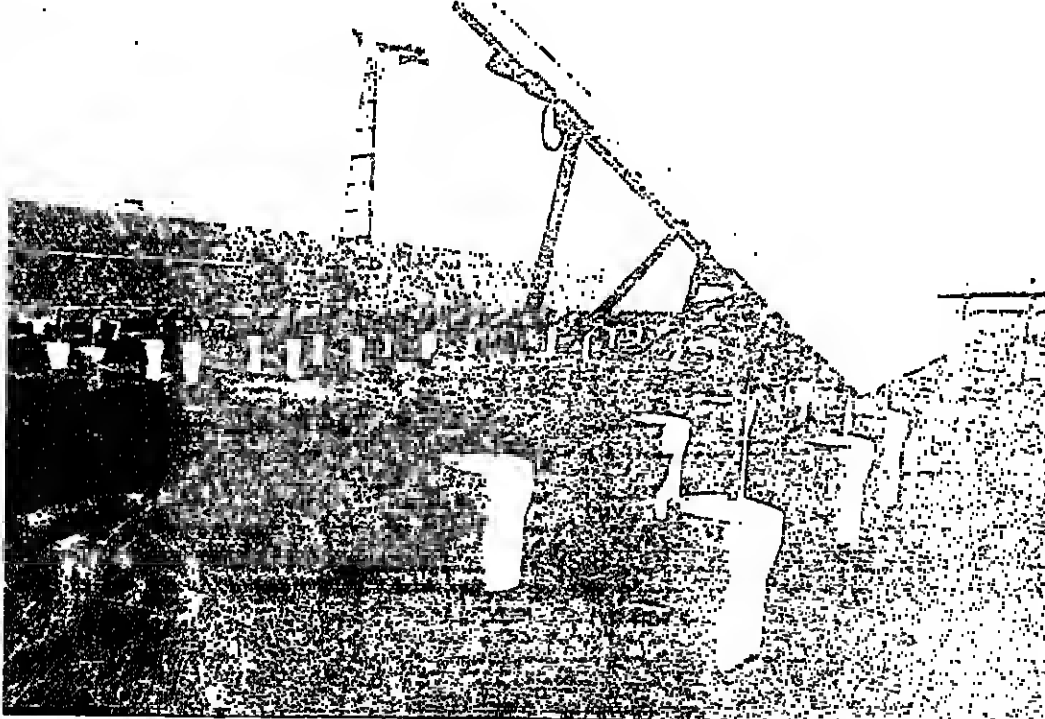
The Federal Research Ministry is offering participants in the major pilot scheme investment-cost subsidies of up to 70 per cent of the price of the German installations. The proviso in this respect is the conclusion of a cooperation agreement between the project partners in the two countries. Industrial-technical cooperation is being further intensified by training programmes — for which scholarships are being awarded by the German side.

In addition to subsidies for investment costs, the Federal Research Ministry is also helping defray transport costs — likewise to a level of 70 per cent — and financing in full a measuring and evaluation programme. The programme includes the promotion of wind-power plants, photovoltaic pumping systems for drinking-water supplies and the

irrigation of farmland, and battery chargers. True, solar battery chargers, unlike other systems, represent a limited solution only. They are restricted to several users living in close proximity, such as a small village of 30 to 50 families, who can charge a battery at minimal cost. But they provide the advantage of being able to reach poorer areas of the population, too.

German engineers are also pinning their hopes to wind-power installations, once they have been assembled in wind parks and are used in conjunction with small

grid systems. The costs of current produced by stations of this nature — which are capable of providing small to medium-sized towns and manufacturing plants with electric energy — amount medium-term to about the same as those of conventional power stations. In many pilot schemes, small photovoltaic installations, which are driven by solar energy, have shown their principal suitability as a basic power supply for lighting, drinking-water pumps, refrigeration, communication facilities and irrigation — in Press.



German test programmes commencing in the Third World (Photo IN-Press)

Decision to kill Musawi was taken in December

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israel's decision to assassinate Shiite Muslim leader Sheikh Abbas Musawi was taken as far back as December, after Israel was cut out of a deal that freed Western hostages in Lebanon, according to Israeli sources.

The decision was also spurred by pressure from Israel's militia ally, the South Lebanon Army, which felt that Sheikh Musawi's Hizbollah movement was increasingly taking control of areas close to the SLA's domain in the south of the country.

The sources, insisting on anonymity, said the political decision to kill Sheikh Musawi arose from a feeling that Hizbollah had become too powerful in South

Lebanon. Israel was also angry because its expectations concerning the "N"-brokered hostage deal were "frustrated," the sources said.

The Israelis maintain that Hizbollah failed to make good on assurances that the hostage deal would resolve the fate of Ron Arad, an Israeli air force navigator, and other servicemen who went missing in Lebanon in the 1980s.

Israeli newspapers said that once the decision was made in principle to kill Sheikh Musawi, the timing of the actual operation depended on an opportunity.

When word came that Sheikh Musawi would travel by car on Feb. 17 to a memorial service in

South Lebanon, the green light was given in a "telephone conversation among a handful of people, at the centre of them the prime minister, (Yitzhak Shamir)," Uzi Bentsman wrote in the independent Haaretz daily.

Mr. Bentsman and other commentators, as well as the sources, insisted the assassination had nothing to do with the killing of three Israeli soldiers by Palestinians two days before Sheikh Musawi's death.

Emanuel Rosen, a respected military commentator, wrote in the daily Maariv: "When the last Western hostage left Lebanon, the clock on Musawi's life began to run out."

Mr. Rosen wrote that in recent months, Hizbollah has been taking control of South Lebanon, acting with the agreement of the Syrians and under the auspices of the Lebanese army.

He said Hizbollah guerrillas moved south into villages abutting Israel's self-declared "security zone" in southern Lebanon. "Hizbollah became the leading and almost exclusive force in terrorist activity north and south of the security zone," Mr. Rosen wrote.

As a result, he wrote, the SLA and villagers in the "security zone" wanted "an Israeli army response."

Lebanon

(Continued from page 1)

guerrillas and the Israelis over the past week claimed six lives and left 37 wounded.

Thousands of villagers were forced to flee, and many lost their homes in shellfire, especially in the villages of Kafra and Yater. No rocket attacks were reported Sunday as some of the 10,000 refugees who fled the fighting struggled back to their villages through heavy rain (see page 2).

Lebanon's Higher Defence Council, made up of senior army and police commanders, said Hizbollah and the other Shiite militia, Amal, agreed Saturday to stop rocket attacks against Israel and its self-proclaimed "security zone."

Police said a token force of about 200 fighters were withdrawn Sunday from the powder-keg zone. Another 800 appeared to be staying in the Kafra-Yater region, but had changed to civilian clothes and apparently stashed their weapons. The Hizbollah guerrillas, later

joined by Amal fighters, swarmed into Kafra and Yater Friday after an Israeli armoured column ended a 24-hour occupation and withdrew back into the "security zone."

Israel's chief of staff, Ehud Barak, expressed hope Saturday that the confrontation was winding down. But he warned the guerrillas they would "pay a very high price" if they launch any more rocket attacks on northern Israel or the "security zone."

U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali Saturday dispatched his

top peacekeeping official, Marack Goulding, to defuse the crisis. He was expected in Beirut Monday.

The conservative Al Anwar daily said Sunday that Lebanese officials would discuss with him a plan to deploy Lebanese troops in the operational zone of U.N. peacekeepers.

Officials declined comment. But if approved, the plan would put an unspecified number of the 12,000 Lebanese troops in the south closer to the 1,100-square-kilometre "security zone" which Israel established in 1985.

JORDAN MARKET PLACE

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Jordan Times

JORDAN MARKET PLACE

Hughes revives United's title bid

LONDON (R) — Mark Hughes, Manchester United's goal-hunting striker, revived his side's flagging pursuit of the English League title.

The man dubbed "sparky" by his team mates produced another typically lively performance Saturday and scored both goals in Manchester's 2-0 win against Crystal Palace, their first victory for five games.

It was precisely the kind of inspirational display that manager Alex Ferguson hoped would result from his team's two-week rest and boosted United's quest for their first championship in 25 years after an indifferent last few weeks.

United had won only two of their last seven league games before Saturday as a packed programme of cup and league matches sapped their strength.

"Before this break I felt that 11 games in 44 days had taken its toll," said Ferguson.

Victory calmed tense nerves at Old Trafford and, more importantly, gave United a four-point cushion over second-placed Leeds, who have been stalking them with a hunter's intensity most of the season.

Before Saturday's match Ferguson made an unusual public prediction that his side were ready to win the title which has become a growing obsession with each passing season since their last triumph in 1967.

"We are now in the finishing straight with 14 games to go and

I'm glad Leeds are breathing down our neck. We respond better to challenges at this club.

"There will be pressure, the nerves will be jangling but there is no question mark over the players' characters. I believe they are good enough to do it and can handle the situation," he said.

Hughes, who scored both goals in last season's European Cup Winners' Cup final victory against Barcelona and two in the 1990 F.A. Cup final draw against Palace, showed he was fresh after his break.

Hughes, who has been in the shadow of his strike partner Brian McClair with 20 goals this season, scored in the 11th and 51st minutes to take his tally to 11 and marked the first time in a lean spell of eight league games that Manchester United have scored more than once.

But, in his enthusiasm for a hat-trick, he got himself booked after tussling with defender Eric Young.

Ferguson was fuming at the referee's decision which cost Hughes a two match suspension and rules him out of the League Cup semifinal second leg with Middlesbrough and a first division game against Sheffield United.

"He has scored two goals today, he's the sort of player who could go on a run of goals, but now he's going to have to sit it out for a while," said Ferguson.

"He was very unfairly dealt with and because of that he will

now miss two important matches. Young impeded him first and it should have been a foul for us but Mark is the one who is going to suffer."

The championship effectively turned into a two-horse sprint to the finish when Manchester City and Liverpool, in third and fourth places, both suffered rare defeats.

Liverpool, who had been threatening to mount a title challenge but without real conviction, were thumped 3-0 at Norwich, and Manchester City, living in the shadow of their more illustrious neighbours all season, lost for only the second time in 11 league games, 2-1 at Wimbledon.

The north London derby between Tottenham and Arsenal ended in a 1-1 draw when Ian Wright equalised for Arsenal in the last minute.

Injury-hit Liverpool, whose England international defender Rob Jones joined the list of absentees after hurting a leg on his debut against France Wednesday, collapsed in the second half against Norwich to concede only their second defeat in 18 games.

Colin Woodthorpe scored his first goal for the club in the 67th minute and Robert Fleck hit two in the 70th and 90th minutes to leave Liverpool 12 points adrift of the leaders.

Manchester City, 10 points behind United, were rocked by a goal after just two minutes from John Fasham and a second two minutes before halftime by Robbie Earle. Mike Sheron pulled

one back in the 55th minute. Aston Villa beat Oldham 1-0 a day after buying their England defender Earl Barrett.

Barrett, signed too late to play against his old club, saw his new team record their first league win of 1992 and score their first league goal since New Year's Day.

Sheffield Wednesday, beaten 7-1 at Arsenal last week, grabbed a 2-1 victory against West Ham thanks to a goal from Viv Anderson three minutes before fulltime and moved into fourth place above Liverpool.

Alan Shearer, who scored on his debut for England against France last Wednesday, failed to find his touch for Southampton, who remain bottom of the first division after drawing 0-0 at home to Coventry.

Coventry played the second half with only 10 men after Robert Rosario was sent off in the 41st minute for his second bookable offence.

Heavy rain washed out the games involving the top two sides in the Scottish premier league, Rangers against Aberdeen and Falkirk versus Hearts.

Celtic closed the gap on second-placed Hearts to four points with a 2-0 victory at Hibernian with first-half goals from Charlie Nicholas and Gerry Creaney.

Nicholas, out of action since December with a hamstring injury, took just 13 minutes to take his tally of premier league goals to 99.

Sampras beats Gilbert to reach Philadelphia final

PHILADELPHIA (R) — Pete Sampras reached the finals in Philadelphia, the launch pad for his sky-rocketing career, for a third year in a row and headed for another surge up the world rankings when he beat Brad Gilbert 6-4, 6-3 in the \$865,000 U.S. Pro Indoor Tournament.

Philadelphia was where Sampras, who has since zoomed up the rankings to stand fifth in the world, won the first title of his career when he beat Andrei Gornes in 1990. Last year, the hard-hitting American lost a five-set final to Ivan Lendl.

"The first time I won here it was more of a surprise," said Sampras, who was then 18. "Last year, I was expected to get in the finals. It's great to do it three years in a row."

According to an ATP Tour official here, if Sampras wins Sunday's final, he will move up the rankings Monday to number three, the highest of his career. That would vault him past fourth-ranked Boris Becker and third-ranked Michael Stich, who is set to face Lendl in the semifinals.

Sampras's opponent in the final Sunday will be 16th-seeded Andrei Mansdorf, who beat 11th seed Francisco Clavet of Spain 5-7, 6-3, 6-2.

"I expect to win it," said Sampras, who won the U.S. Open in 1990. "I expect to win every match I play. I'm winning the matches I'm supposed to."

Gilbert said if Sampras were a stock share traded on Wall Street, he would be a good investment.

"With as many bad stocks as I've bought in my life, if I had stock in him, I'd feel pretty good," said Gilbert. "If he stays healthy, there's nowhere for him to go but up."

Sampras came back just 12 hours after surviving a tough 3-6, 7-6, 7-6 battle with Aaron Krickstein. After the Krickstein quarterfinal, Sampras was exhausted.

But he bounced back quickly to trounce Gilbert, the sixth seed, in one hour 10 minutes.

"He hits the ball a lot harder than the guys I play before," said the 22nd-ranked Gilbert, who had previously won three matches against Sampras and lost two.

"It's hard for me to adjust because he has such a big serve. He forces me into mistakes because he hits the ball so flat and hard. I can't play my way into points because he's so much more aggressive than me."

Sampras squandered a 4-1 lead in the first set, letting Gilbert break his serve in the seventh game and even the score at four-all. But Sampras recovered immediately from his lapse in concentration and won the last two games of the set.

Both times that Gilbert, 31, lost his serve in the first set, he lost it with double faults. He flubbed two serves at 0-40 in the fourth game and then at 15-40 in the 10th game.

SPORTS NEWS IN BRIEF

Jordanian team leaves for Japan

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan's table-tennis delegation left for Nikata, Japan, Sunday to take part in South-West Asia's Olympic preliminaries. Representing Jordan are Marwan Diya, the men's champion, and Nadya Rashad, the women's champion and the winner of the silver medal in the last Arab Table-Tennis Championships held in Cairo. National teams from Bahrain, Syria, Yemen, Lebanon and Iran will also be competing to qualify for the summer Olympics in Barcelona, Spain.

Morcell, McColgan set indoor records

BIRMINGHAM, England (R) — World outdoor champions Nouredine Morcell and Liz McColgan set world indoor records for the men's 1,000 metres and women's 5,000 metres respectively at an international athletics meeting. Algerian Morcell, the world 1,500 metres champion, clocked two minutes 15.26 seconds to slice Dutchman Rob Druppers' four-year-old mark of 2:16.4 by more than a second. Then world 10,000 metres champion McColgan of Britain lapped each of her seven opponents to clock 15:03.17, taking more than 10 seconds off German Uta Pippig's year-old mark of 15:13.72. Morcell was paced by Britain's Iken Billy and Kenyan Joseph Cheshire for three of the five laps but then went it alone with 400 metres to run. McColgan said she had felt a slight hamstring twinge while warming up. "But once I got into it with the crowd cheering me on, there was no problem," she said. "I'm delighted." American Leroy Burrell, who said he was only 85 per cent fit before the race, held off Namibia's Frankie Fredericks to win the men's 60 metres.

Garrison to face McNeil in Oklahoma

OKLAHOMA CITY, Oklahoma (R) — Top seed Zina Garrison beat Amy Frazier and tied seed Lori McNeil defeated Mamon Bollegraf Saturday to set up a match between the two longtime friends in the singles final of the \$150,000 Virginia Slims of Oklahoma tennis tournament. Garrison beat Frazier, the 1990 champion here, 6-4 0-4 6-4 and McNeil, the 1988 winner, knocked out the Netherlands' Bollegraf, the seventh-seeded 1989 champion, 6-4 6-2 in semifinal matches. "I was hoping to play Lori this week since she beat me 6-1 6-3 last week in Chicago," said Garrison. "We grew up together in Houston, and really know each other well."

Dortmund stays top in German League

BONN (R) — International midfielder Matthias Sammer scored in the 72nd minute as VfB Stuttgart edged closer to leaders Borussia Dortmund with a 1-0 win at Schalke in the German first division. Dortmund, held 0-0 at lowly former East German club Dynamo Dresden, stayed two points clear as Kaiserslautern also drew. Stuttgart, leading over the champions into second place on goal difference. "It was a dramatic game with no boring moments," Stuttgart trainer Christoph Daum said. "Schalke's pressure was strong... in the deciding phase we had a bit more luck." Striker Stefan Kuntz scored an equaliser 12 minutes from time to salvage a 1-1 draw at home for Kaiserslautern against Eintracht Frankfurt, who remained one point further back in fourth place. Sixth-placed Cologne thrashed seventh-placed Nuremberg 4-0 at home, going 3-0 up before halftime with two goals from former German international striker Frank Ordenewitz.

Norris stops Daniels to keep title

SAN DIEGO (R) — Terry Norris successfully defended his World Boxing Council (WBC) super welterweight title against fellow American Carl Daniels Saturday when the referee stopped the fight at 2:37 of the ninth round. The bout was stopped after Norris pinned Daniels to the ropes and then knocked him to the canvas with a pair of combinations. The win improved Norris's record to 31-3. Daniels, who had been ranked fifth by the WBC, lost for the first time in 27 fights. Negotiations are under way for Norris's next defence, probably in Europe this spring against former champion Aaron Davis, who is ranked third by the WBC.

CIS team wins relay marathon

YOKOHAMA (AP) — Elena Romanova of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) took the lead in the fifth leg, as the former Soviet team went on to win Sunday's 10th Yokohama International Women's Ekiden, a relay marathon, just 3 seconds ahead of Romania. CIS anchor Olga Bondarenko, the 1988 Seoul Olympics 10,000-metre gold medalist, crossed the finish line about 20 metres ahead of the second-place Romanian team. Bondarenko's six-runner team took two hours, 16 minutes, 38 seconds to finish the 42.195-kilometre course on the streets of Yokohama. It was the former Soviet team's fourth victory in the annual race. Elena Fidatov of Romania, who passed Britain's Andrea Whitcombe and desperately chased Bondarenko in the final leg, came in second with a time of 2:16:41. Britain finished third in 2:17:31, followed by defending champion China in 2:17:37.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR MONDAY FEBRUARY, 1992

By Thomas S. Pearson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: With Photo going Retrograde today take care of your health and don't do anything that could irritate anyone who is in a position of authority and live up to the letter of the law.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You find that outside and home matters conflict during the day and it will be necessary to schedule time so both can be well handled.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Making your overall plan of action work in your everyday affairs seems difficult during the day but observe ways to do so, then handle them wisely tonight.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) New conditions involving your practical affairs seem to be necessary but there is an element of confusion today which does not vanish until tonight.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) An acquaintance tries to show you under with a plan of action that is to his/her benefit so don't fall for it and you will see clearly.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You can't seem to eliminate a problem that has all kinds of ramifications today so don't try but let them solve themselves which they will be.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 21) Think of the various friends you have who can be helpful in your attaining a desired goal but

don't approach them for assistance until tonight.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You need to use more than average care in the performance of any outside vocational duties as a cloud hangs over such activities for you today.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You want to get off to new interests but the daytime is by no means the right moment for you to do so while you can during the night time.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Promise you have made seem a pain in the neck to keep but try to carry through with them in casual fashion, tonight takes a real upswing.

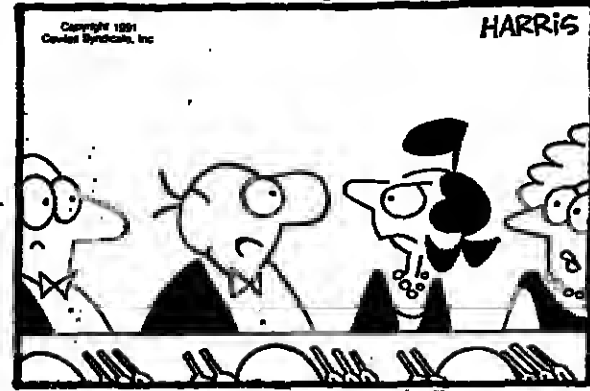
CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Don't let an overly emotional person get you down during the daytime but go your own objective way then tonight you can handle the situation wisely.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Carry on with steadfastness at whatever your activities despite some tensions which cannot be helped today, then tonight enjoy seeing allies.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) The evening is fine for having romance or recreations at the delights you like the most after a day when you can't seem to get your special talents across.

THE BETTER HALF.

By Harris



"I'm not good at formal dinners. Which fork do I use to scratch my back?"

JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Harri Arnold and Bob Lee

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

RUHT

TAFAL

VOCLEN

GRAYUS

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here: _____

(Answers tomorrow)

Saturday's Jumbles: DOUGH HONOR FECOND BESTOW

Answer: Do this before "blasting off" — "COUNT DOWN"

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMMAR HIRSCH
©1991 Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ANSWERS TO WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q.1—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠A1065 ♠763 ♠J66 ♠Q
Partner opens the bidding with one no trump. What do you respond?
A.—Don't overlook the possibility of a 4-4 heart fit. Use the Stayman Convention to check on whether partner has a four-card major. Bid two clubs.

Q.2—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠A1065 ♠763 ♠J66 ♠Q
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 NT Pass 2 ♠ Pass
2 ♠ Pass ?
What do you bid now?
A.—Partner doesn't have a four-card major, but he might have a three-card spade fit. Bid two spades. Since you could have made that bid directly over one no trump, if you had a weak hand, this sequence is forcing on partner. (If you play non-forcing Stayman, you would bid the same way to show this invitational hand.)

Q.3—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠A1065 ♠763 ♠J66 ♠Q
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 NT Pass 2 ♠ Pass
2 ♠ Pass 2 ♠ Pass
2 NT Pass ?
What action do you take?
A.—Your auction has shown a hand of 8-9 points with a five-card spade suit. Knowing that partner has stated that he thinks two no trump is your best spot. What do you have to do? Pass.

Q.4—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠A9 ♠K84 ♠K95 ♠10873
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ Pass 2 ♠ Pass
2 ♠ Pass 2 ♠ Pass
What action do you take?
A.—You have just enough cards to suggest that, unless you do something, the auction is likely to die. The only call we can think of is to double. Since you can't have a trump stack on this sequence, partner will know your double is based on general values with no clear action and will leave it in only with good defensive values.

Peanuts



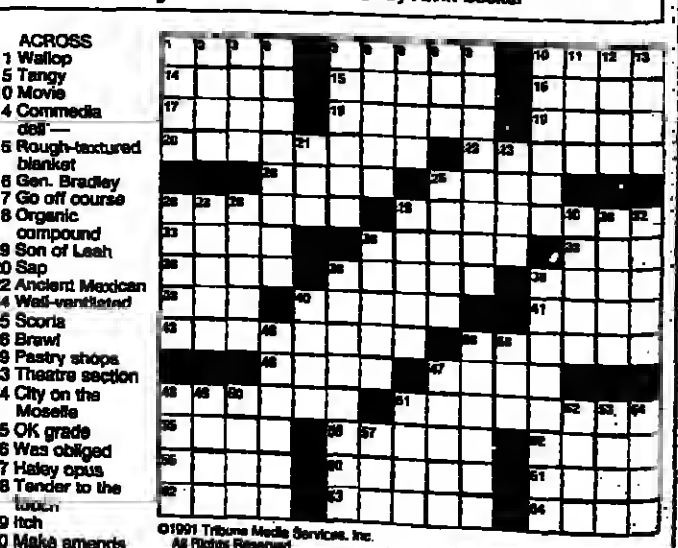
Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



THE Daily Crossword by Alvin Becker



- ACROSS
- 1 Wisp
 - 5 Tasty
 - 10 Movie
 - 14 Commedia dell'arte
 - 15 Rough-textured blanket
 - 16 Gen. Bradley
 - 17 Go off course
 - 18 Organic compound
 - 19 Son of Leah
 - 20 Sap
 - 22 Ancient Mexican
 - 24 Well-ventilated
 - 25 Score
 - 26 Brawl
 - 28 Pastry shops
 - 33 Theatre section
 - 34 City on the Moselle
 - 35 OK grade
 - 36 Was obliged
 - 37 Delay copy
 - 38 Yonder to the south
 - 39 Rich
 - 40 Make friends
 - 41 Artistic lady
 - 42 Dragged through the mud
 - 44 Knitted fabric
 - 45 Mytheninsel
 - 47 Alphabet run
 - 48 Most apt
 - 51 Sped
 - 52 Horse color
 - 56 Dog tag kn
 - 58 Top-notch
 - 59 Lacking interest
 - 60 Poetaster's output
 - 61 Zulu work
 - 62 Cots
 - 63 Church official
 - 64 Comparison word

DOWN

 - 1 Except
 - 2 Ex. architect
 - 3 Suit to
 - 4 Landscaped in a way
 - 5 Pious
 - 6 Precipitous
 - 7 Poker face
 - 8 Hwy.
 - 9 Has a share
 - 10 Arrest
 - 11 — a man with seven...
 - 12 Wheel hub
 - 13 An idle
 - 21 By way of
 - 22 Non-clergy
 - 25 "Pink"
 - 27 Caramen
 - 28 NASA rocket
 - 29 Expensive
 - 30 Images
 - 31 Spooky
 - 32 Unlumped
 - 34 Incher
 - 37 Uncle or aunt
 - 38 NCO
 - 40 Baseball
 - 41 set
 - 43 Admiration
 - 44 Comic
 - 45 Salamander
 - 47 — Macabre
 - 48 Graceful horse
 - 49 Yarn causer
 - 50 "The best schemes" of mics...
 - 51 Drove
 - 52 Ark man
 - 53 Stellan resort
 - 54 School VIP
 - 57 Sister. abbr.

Financial Markets
Jordan Times
in co-operation with
Cairo Amman Bank

Foreign Exchange Market Summary (February 17 - February 21, 1992)

AMMAN — The demand for dollars accelerated during the course of last week, as expectations of traders and investors alike over its medium-term outlook continued to be predominantly positive. Repeated rounds of central-bank intervention proved futile as market participants pushed the dollar through resistance levels. At the end of the week, the dollar was an average of 1.9 per cent higher against European currencies and 0.8 per cent higher against the yen.

As New York closed Monday, the dollar ended slightly weaker in Europe at what proved to be its lowest closing levels of the week at 1.6230 marks. 1.7745 dollars to the pound sterling and 126.95 yen. It had earlier retreated in the Far East following joint intervention by the Bank of Japan and the Fed after the U.S. unit breached 128 yen. The impact of the intervention was, nevertheless, limited, as some traders saw in its decline an opportunity to buy cheaper dollars.

Fresh information of continued economic retrenchment in Germany in the fourth quarter of 1991 circulated Tuesday, coupled with expectations of a near term decline in European currencies' interest rate advantage over the dollar. The dollar consequently breached resistance at 1.6330 marks and hit its three-month high of 1.6475 marks before ending at 1.6440 marks.

On the other hand, and as an alternative to cutting interest rates, the Fed eased credit in the U.S. by lowering its reserve requirement on some bank deposits Tuesday. The move was said to have hampered the dollar's rise as did some "economic boom pumping" comments from the Bundesbank deputy president.

By Wednesday, traders seemed to have finally weighed the risks of the consequences of a "yes" central bank intervention. Traders pushed the dollar through 128.20 yen, the level which had provoked Monday's intervention, despite signs of a potential Bank of Japan (BOJ) intervention. The contention was that unless aggressive and coordinated between several central banks, any intervention move will be of limited impact and not cost-effective.

Against European currencies, the dollar ended almost unchanged. Although positive U.S. economic data pulled it to 1.65 marks, failure to extend the rally further triggered some profit-taking at the end of the day.

Thursday witnessed yet another BOJ intervention that took the dollar to a low of 127.40 yen. But as anticipated, traders again grabbed the opportunity to buy cheaper dollars. The U.S. unit even succeeded in rising above 1.65 marks in Tokyo, but retreated later in New York, to finish in the range of the previous two days.

The dollar rallied again Friday above the 1.65 mark level, and at its highest closing levels of the week. Some observers commented that, unlike previous rallies, this one was not confined to speculators and technical players. In fact, investment funds, major corporations and Middle East players were significantly involved. The main motive of the buying activity according to observers, was fear of being taken by surprise by a sudden dollar rally, in line with the expectations of a U.S. recovery starting before mid 1992.

Central bank intervention remains a concern in the market, although market participants are indecisive about its impact. Although a Bundesbank intervention is not expected at this stage, some market participants expect the American and Japanese central banks to intervene intermittently this week. Meanwhile, some observers maintained that the dollar's close before the weekend above 1.65 marks provided a good possibility that the U.S. unit will be able to extend its gains during the coming week. Traders are said to be awaiting the release of positive U.S. economic reports to confirm and justify the dollar's upward trend.

New York Closing Rates for Major Currencies Against the U.S. Dollar

Currency	14/2/92 Close	21/2/92 Close	Percent Change
Sterling Pound	1.7710	1.7405	-1.72%
Deutsche Mark	1.6265	1.6568	+1.82%
Swiss Franc	1.4659	1.5015	-2.37%
French Franc	5.5335	5.6275	-1.67%
Japanese Yen	127.90	128.95	-0.8%

USD Per STD

Euro-Currency Interest Rates

Currency	14/2/1992 1-Month (%)	14/2/1992 1-Year (%)	21/2/1992 1-Month (%)	21/2/1992 1-Year (%)
U.S. Dollar	5.93	4.50	4.06	4.68
Sterling Pound	10.50	10.00	10.25	10.03
Deutsche Mark	8.50	9.25	9.50	9.31
Swiss Franc	7.31	7.19	7.50	7.25
French Franc	9.93	9.62	9.87	9.65
Japanese Yen	5.53	4.87	5.37	4.78

Interbank bid rates for amounts exceeding U.S. Dollars 1,000,000 or equivalent

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	.6820	.6840
Sterling Pound	1.1863	1.1922
Deutsche Mark	.4109	.4130
Swiss Franc	.4538	.4561
French Franc	.1210	.1216
Japanese Yen	.5285	.5311
Dutch Guilder	.3656	.3674
Swedish Krona	.1137	.1143
Italian Lira	.0548	.0551
Belgian Franc	.02001	.02011

Per 100

Insolvencies in Britain register sharp rise

LONDON (R) — British company insolvencies soared 45 per cent in 1991 to 21,827 from 15,051 a year earlier, official Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) figures showed.

The figures mean Britain's long and deep recession sent one in every 43 registered British businesses into liquidation last year, damaging business confidence and pushing up unemployment.

The figures are a fresh blow to Britain's ruling Conservative Party, which is preparing for a general election expected in April or May against the backdrop of a weak economy.

Zambia pleads for debt relief, world aid

LUSAKA (AP) — Zambia's president has made an impassioned plea for international aid to rebuild an economy wrecked by years of mismanagement.

Frederick Chiluba said his Western-prescribed efforts to restructure Zambia were being "choked" by massive payments on the country's \$6.5 billion foreign debt. Mr. Chiluba inherited the debt from Kenneth Kaunda, whom he ousted in October elections.

"We are paying for a crime caused by the previous system which we removed," Mr. Chiluba told visiting World Bank President Lewis Preston. "We have not only allowed democracy to resurface," he added, "but we have also freed enterprises from government monopoly."

Mr. Chiluba appealed to the World Bank, a major creditor, to influence other donors "to give us a relief so that we can carry out our programmes and uplift the living standards of our people."

Mr. Kaunda led Zambia to independence from Britain in 1964. Donor agencies contend mismanagement, corruption and economic policies modelled after those of eastern Europe created the financial mess he left behind.

Mr. Chiluba has abolished millions of dollars in state subsidies on food, moved toward privatising state corporations, cut the bloated civil service and mounted a blitz against crooked politicians. But he told Mr. Preston almost all new income was being absorbed by debt payments.

Yves Saint Laurent reports 2% sales rise

PARIS (R) — French fashion and perfumes group Yves Saint Laurent has said 1991 sales rose two per cent to 3.1 billion francs (\$74 million) despite the recession.

The group founded by designer Yves Saint Laurent and business partner Pierre Berge in 1962 maintained its prediction of a slight drop in 1991 profit from 1990's 252 million francs (\$43 million).

Heavy investment of 230 million francs (\$47 million) in 1991, to pay in part for the launch of a new line in skin care, and a one-time foreign-currency gain in 1990 of 25 million francs (\$4.7 million) explained the dip in profit, it said.

Money poll finds personal finances of 4 out of 10 Americans worsened

NEW YORK (Agencies) — Nearly four in 10 Americans believe their personal finances have worsened under the Bush administration, Money magazine said in a poll.

The seventh annual "Americans and their Money" poll also found that one in five Americans, when surveyed last year, believed the country was in the beginning of a depression.

Money further found that 30 per cent of all consumers will continue to spend less money after the economic downturn ends.

The survey is based on results from two 1991 polls conducted for the magazine by Willard and Shullman, a Greenwich, Connecticut, research firm. The first survey, completed in August, queried 1,855 randomly selected adults by mail as well as 841 Money subscribers.

The second survey was a telephone poll of 1,000 adults completed in October.

The polls covered a range of economic questions, such as confidence in the economy and the government, types of preferred investments and personal income. Money said the goal of the study was to examine the country's more affluent households. Therefore, households in higher-income areas were oversampled and those in lower income areas were undersampled.

The margin of error for the mail survey was two percentage points and for the telephone poll, it was three percentage points.

Money magazine, a publication of Time Warner Inc., has conducted the annual survey since 1983.

Meanwhile, jobless claims rose 18,000 in the first week of February as 452,000 Americans made first-time visits to unemployment offices, the government has reported.

ported.

The number of Americans filing initial claims for jobless benefits during the week ending Feb. 8 was up from the previous week's revised mark of 434,000, the Labour Department said.

The 18,000 jump in claims was slightly worse than had been expected. Most analysts had predicted a more moderate increase of about 6,000, following two weeks of modest declines.

Analysts hesitate to read too much into a one-week movement in the claims, and instead look at a moving four-week average of claims for a better barometer of hiring practices.

That average remained stuck at about 450,000 for the latest four-week period.

"I hesitate to use the word stabilised, because every week, we're having 450,000 new claims being filed by people who don't have jobs," said Robert Brusca of Nikko Securities. "That is not a stable situation."

While a 450,000 average is below the recession's worst — claims were stuck at around 500,000 for a stretch last March — it is worse than last summer, when things seemed to improve and the average fell to about 410,000 in September.

"You can clearly see the double-dip. Now there's concern this could turn into a triple dip," Mr. Brusca said, noting there have been hints that the economy may be on the upswing again.

The number was the first peak at job conditions for the month of February. Last month, the nation's unemployment rate remained at a five-year high of 7.1 per cent in January.

Many analysts think the rate could worsen in coming months, possibly topping 7.5 per cent by mid-year before the economy makes enough of a rebound from the recession to rally new hiring.

There are about 8.9 million Americans without work. For the week ending Feb. 1, there were about 3.3 million people actually receiving unemployment benefits, a 66,000 decrease from the week before, the Labour Department said.

In another area, Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan gave an upbeat assessment of the prospects for faster growth in the U.S. economy and slower inflation in testimony to Congress that seemed designed to discourage big election-year tax cuts.

"(We) are somewhat more optimistic," Mr. Greenspan told a House of Representatives Banking Subcommittee. "We are beginning to see stirrings."

Mr. Greenspan's remarks appeared to have a two-pronged purpose — to discourage lawmakers from pushing ahead with big tax cuts to boost the economy while soothing financial market fears about faster inflation as growth picks up.

Pressure for a tax-cut package is expected to grow as President George Bush, who suffered a humiliating setback in the New Hampshire primary, tries to show he is tackling problems in the nation's economy.

But Mr. Greenspan said a politically popular tax cut for the middle-class would have little effect on the economy and could boost inflation.

He also indicated that the Federal Reserve (Fed) saw no reason now to cut interest rates further to lift the economy.

"There are reasons to believe that business activity will pick up," Mr. Greenspan said. "Anecdotal reports and early data seem to be indicating that spending is starting to firm in some sectors."

In the Fed's semi-annual report on the economy to Congress, the

central bank said the rate cuts so far will provide "effective support" for economic growth this year.

"In this regard, the early indications of a marked pick-up in residential real estate activity and a rise in retail sales are a particularly favourable sign," the report said.

But it added that Fed policymakers see recent job losses and weak consumer confidence as likely to restrain growth.

Mr. Greenspan also gave an optimistic assessment of the outlook for inflation, saying that it could continue to fall next year even as the economy expands.

Encouraged by Mr. Greenspan's testimony, inflation-wary investors pushed bond prices up and long-term rates down after news of a tiny rise in consumer prices last month. The Labour Department said Wednesday that consumer prices rose a scant 0.1 per cent in January, the smallest increase since July.

The Fed forecasts that consumer prices will rise three to 3.5 per cent this year, about the same as last year's 3.1 per cent.

In a sign of life for the economy, the government reported separately that housing starts jumped in January.

Construction of new homes and apartments rose a sharp 5.5 per cent last month to the best levels in nearly two years, the Commerce Department said.

Fed policymakers generally expect the nation's gross domestic product to expand by 1.75 to 2.5 per cent in 1992 after growth of 0.2 per cent last year.

In another statement, U.S. Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady has warned that an economic package endorsed by key Democratic legislators could trigger spending cuts in several government programmes.

The \$90 billion package, agreed by Democrats on the influential House of Representatives Ways and Means Committee, proposes a temporary tax cut for middle-class Americans and a permanent tax increase on the wealthy.

While the package is designed to pay for itself over five years, Democrats concede it will be \$30 billion in the negative during the first two years.

Mr. Brady told Reuters in an interview the gap can only be closed in three ways — with spending cuts in "very important" government programmes, by raising taxes, or by sanctioning a bigger budget deficit, which would push up interest rates. "It will hurt the economy," said Mr. Brady.

His comments seemed designed to put political heat back on the Democrats, who seized the initiative last week in ongoing clashes with the Republican administration over how to spur the economy.

President Bush has endorsed a short-term package put forward by Republicans which does not include a middle income tax cut but gives first time home buyers a tax credit.

Under the 1990 budget deal hammered out between Congress and the administration, legislative actions which would increase the deficit automatically trigger offsetting spending cuts in government programmes.

Administration officials said the government would have to cut Medicare, the government's medical programme for the elderly, by up to \$4.4 billion over the next two years if the House Democrats' plan went through.

Other federal programmes would also be reduced, including farm support, student loans and other social services.

Albania suspends passenger train services

TIRANA (R) — Albania has suspended all passenger train services saying theft, vandalism and neglect had made them utterly unsafe.

"The situation is terrible and there is danger of serious accidents if we kept the service running," Astrit Salihari, director of the railway administration, said. "Poor telephone communications could result in a train collision at any moment because copper telephone wire is being torn down and stolen," he told Reuters.

The state of the railways highlighted the grim legacy left in the impoverished Balkan state by Stalinist dictator Enver Hoxha and his heirs who pursued a policy of "self-sufficiency" for nearly five decades.

A multi-party government is now faced with chronic food shortages, lack of raw materials and apathy in a population unused to having a say in major decisions.

"Most wooden (track) sleepers are rotten and we have had no regular supply of new ones for three years," Mr. Salihari added. Under communist rule, Albania's railways were mostly built by what was called "voluntary youth labour." But construction was often shoddy.

The antiquated Chinese, Polish and pre-war French carriages have now been completely stripped of their upholstery and even iron frames of the seats have been stolen by people trying to start up a private business.

Cuba doubles some official sale prices of farm products

HAVANA (Agencies) — Cuba's communist government has doubled the official sale prices of several staple vegetables, moving to cut heavy state farming subsidies and offset the rising cost of fertiliser, pesticide, herbicide and seed imports.

The official Communist Party newspaper Granma announced the price increases to consumers who are already squeezed by tight rationing and shortages of some food products and practically all consumer goods.

Sale prices of staples like potatoes, tomatoes, carrots, beetroot and bananas were doubled. The increases were smaller for cabbage, lettuce and onions and bigger for peppers and malanga, a tuber similar to a potato which is highly prized by Cubans.

For example almost half a kilogramme of potatoes would now cost 30 centavos (40 cents) instead of 15 (20).

Granma said a total of 25 new prices had been approved. They remained well within the budget of the average family in Cuba, where the average monthly wage is around 170 pesos (\$220).

It justified the increases by saying "the state must not carry on paying heavy subsidies which amount to hundreds of millions of pesos every year."

Farming subsidies alone in 1991 cost the government more

than 447 million pesos (\$580 million) at the official exchange rate, Granma said.

In line with the socialist economic policies introduced after the 1959 revolution, President Fidel Castro's administration has kept prices of basic goods consistently low.

But as the island struggles to cope with the collapse of its preferential trade links with eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, the government has moved to improve management of its internal and external finances.

Granma said: "It's no secret to anyone that our status as an underdeveloped farming nation means that we have to shoulder the rising cost of buying (farming) inputs."

Prices of pesticides, herbicides, fertiliser and seeds were increasing every year, the newspaper said.

For example, the country spent between \$8 million and \$10 million a year on buying potato seeds abroad.

President Castro said the collapse of European communism has bailed his country's imports and forced Cuba to cut fuel consumption 60 per cent.

But the Cuban leader vowed to maintain his staunch communist course, despite foreign calls for him to allow more political freedom and modify his socialist economy.

"We remain firm here, committed to maintaining the ideas, the conquests of the revolution," President Castro told a group of Brazilian visitors in televised remarks carried by the official Prensa Latina news agency.

President Castro decried "a wave of savage neoliberalism" sweeping the world, "throwing people into hunger, into the street."

He called such free-market policies "the most brutal violation of human rights." "We are dividing what we have among ourselves and each citizen feels secure," President Castro said. "In spite of these catastrophic consequences, not a single child lacks school, the universities continue open, the hospitals continue to function, not a single patient lacks medical care."

Cuba's economy was stunned by the collapse of the eastern bloc, which accounted for 85 per cent of its foreign trade.

Much of that trade was on terms that subsidised Cuba. By most estimates, the subsidies dwarfed the costs Cuba suffered due to a very long U.S. embargo of the island.

Cuban officials have slashed fuel consumption with drastic cuts in public transportation, factory operations and heating. Many items, ranging from milk to tobacco, have grown scarce and rationing has been tightened.

IMF chief warns against giving in to populist demands

CARTAGENA, Colombia (AP) — Latin American presidents employing demagogic and populist solutions to recession and class conflict are inviting a new era of military dictatorship, an International Monetary Fund official said.

"If leaders return to complacency or give in to populist demands, then the risk of demagoguery and economic instability will rise up and open the way to the return of dictatorial regimes," IMF President Michel Camdessus has said.

Many Latin American countries had dictatorships in the last 30 years, among them Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Bolivia, Peru, Paraguay, Panama, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador.

Almost all of those countries have returned to democracy.

Asked at a news conference if the IMF's own policies are resulting in Latin American instability, Mr. Camdessus said "our policies do not affect sovereignty. They are not arbitrary. They seek growth with stability and without inflation."

He denied that the IMF's policies recommended for Venezuela were responsible for an attempted military coup there.

"These uprisings are a consequence of putting off structural adjustments in the last decade," the IMF official said.

"Latin America is the continent with the most opportunities for investors," Mr. Camdessus said. But he said economic discipline is necessary to gain the faith of creditors in other countries.

China plans to cut high car prices

BEIJING (R) — China, a nation of cyclists, plans to cut the unreasonable prices of private cars so more people can afford them, state radio has reported.

"Chinese consumers must pay so much more for domestic cars than people in other countries," it said. Spare parts can sometimes cost more than a car, the radio added.

New regulations on pricing will be announced later this year, to bring prices down gradually, it said.

The subject has been a rare discordant topic in the rigidly controlled official press.

British Aerospace posts \$81m loss at end of last year

LONDON (R) — Civil and military aircraft maker British Aerospace PLC dived \$81 million (\$142 million) into the red last year, but sounded a cautiously optimistic note for the future.

The news was greeted with relief on financial markets which had expected worse figures from the troubled firm, whose activities range from aircraft through guided weapons and satellites to Rover motor vehicles and property.

Sales were virtually unchanged at £10.56 billion (\$18.5 billion) compared with £10.54 billion in 1990.

The company made a £376 million (\$659 million) profit in 1990.

"Economic and trading conditions remain difficult across each of our principal business areas," chairman Sir Graham Day said. But the company now has clear objectives for each of its divisions and a rationalisation programme which will concentrate its efforts on core areas, he added.

"We are confident that the success of these programmes will become increasingly apparent in

the performance of the group," he pointed out.

Sir Day said he was confident of winning another large defence contract from Saudi Arabia, but did not say when.

British Aerospace Engineering is prime contractor and earns some £2 billion (\$3.5 billion) a year from phase one of the Al Yamamah deal.

Signature of the long-awaited phase two — expected to include 48 Tornado and 60 Hawk aircraft — could take this to £3 billion

(\$5.3 billion) a year.

Sir Day said the group was restructuring to put all its defence activities under one division, British Aerospace Defence Ltd., and was splitting its loss-making commuter aircraft programmes from the more profitable Airbus activities, by setting up a separate company British Aerospace Airbus Ltd.

The company has said in the past it wants to find partners for its regional aircraft programmes

Chinese port workers get pay cut after accident

PEKING (R) — Port authorities in Shanghai have ordered pay cuts for the entire workforce of 30,000 after a tanker accident in January, the official China Daily has said.

The Shanghai Marine Shipping Bureau reduced monthly wages by 10-20 yuan (\$1.83-\$3.66) for the next six months to "draw a lesson" from the mishap in the port, the newspaper said.

"An investigation has found that the disaster was caused by electric welding on board safety regulations," the newspaper said. The accident spurred spot inspections for negligence on passenger and cargo ships in other major ports, the newspaper said.

The average urban wage is around 100 yuan (\$18) a month.

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Soviet army's big day turns sour

MOSCOW (R) — The threat of war in Transcaucasia and looming political divisions marred Sunday's celebration of Soviet Army Day, once the Red Army's ritual highpoint.

About 5,000 hardline Communists, demanding the resignation of Russian President Boris Yeltsin, held an illegal rally near the Kremlin to demand restoration of the Soviet Union and glorify its once awesome military machine.

Similar rallies on the 74th anniversary of the Soviet army took place in other parts of the Commonwealth of Independent States, including the Belarusian capital Minsk and in the Central Asian state of Tajikistan.

"The army is our last hope, our last protector," said one marcher, backed by a sea of red hammer-and-sickle flags and portraits of dictator Josef Stalin.

"We must fight for our united fatherland, for the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics," Viktor Alksnis — derided by liberals as one of the army's black columns — shouted to the crowd.

The angry tone of Sunday's meetings on what was traditionally a festive day underscored the chaos and competing pressures now entangling the remnants of the Soviet military.

Divisions within the Commonwealth of Independent States, successor to the Soviet Union, threaten to break up the 3.7 million man army into national units.

Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova are leading the move toward national armies. All three have rejected a common, conventional force.

In Russia, conservative forces are pressing the officer corps to rebel against the new order, which they blame for lowering living standards and gutting Soviet military might.

And deepening conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh has raised the danger the armed forces could be drawn into intractable ethnic strife between rival Commonwealth members.

More than 1,000 people have died in four years of fighting over Karabakh, a predominantly Armenian enclave administered by Azerbaijan. The two sides traded artillery rounds — and fresh allegations of atrocities — at the weekend.

The Armenian Defence Ministry Sunday suggested Commonwealth forces were deliberately "leaking" weapons to Azeri militants and it called for immediate steps to halt the flow of arms and ammunition.

The Azeris have made similar allegations.

It also denied Baku's charges that Armenia and Commonwealth forces were conducting joint operations against Azerbaijan's western frontier. The Commonwealth general staff also denied the claims.

The Azeri presidential office, quoted by Interfax news agency, said at the weekend that Armenian and CIS forces, including tanks, were advancing through regions of western Azerbaijan.

ITAR-TASS News Agency said huge salvos from artillery pieces stolen by Azeris from CIS forces rocked the Karabakh capital Stepankert Sunday, killing six civilians and wounding dozens of others.

By tradition, schoolgirls give male classmates — all future soldiers — small presents to mark the army holiday. This year, no such rituals took place.

Moscow city's "democratic" leadership renamed "Soviet Army Day" as "Defence of the Fatherland Day" and marked it with a wreath-laying ceremony at the tomb of the Unknown Soldier near the Kremlin.

President Yeltsin, who attended the ceremony, vowed to hold to his radical economic reforms despite mounting criticism.

At a Kremlin gala Friday, Armed Forces Chief Yevgeny Shaposhnikov reminded about 2,000 officers in full dress to stay out of politics.

"The men of the army and navy are preserving their restraint and... refusing attempts to pull them into political games," he said in an order to mark the day.

"The army has always been with the people, stands by the people now and will continue to do so in future," he told the

Kremlin meeting before a concert of folk dancing and music.

Meanwhile Russian police fought with batons to hold back thousands of Communists who marched towards the Kremlin Sunday denouncing President Yeltsin as a traitor and demanding the restoration of a united Soviet army.

The day brought the first street disorders since Mr. Yeltsin presided over the break up of the Soviet Union in December and launched his economic reforms.

Several people received head and body wounds in the scuffles but no-one was seriously injured.

About 5,000 protesters swept aside a first line of police with little resistance as they marched from the city's Mayakovskiy Square.

Demonstrators shouted "fascists, fascists" and "Sov-yet-aki So-yuz (Soviet Union)" as they surged down the central Tverskoi Boulevard.

"Bring the traitor Yeltsin to trial," one group chanted.

Fifty metres further along the boulevard, special units of police with riot shields and batons hit out as protesters surged forward.

Scattered fist fights broke out as the crowd again broke through to a third line reinforced with heavy trucks.

Police held that line after a further brief scuffle, preventing the protesters marching to Manezh Square where the military were laying wreaths in commemoration of Army Day.

CIS soldier killed in Azeri shelling of Karabakh

MOSCOW (Agencies) — The Commonwealth's Transcaucasian command sent a formal protest to Azerbaijan Sunday after Azeri shelling killed a soldier and wounded nine others in Stepankert, capital of Nagorno-Karabakh.

ITAR-TASS News Agency said the officers of the Transcaucasian military district called the attack Sunday particularly "blasphemous" because it happened on armed forces day.

It said the 366th Motorised Rifle Division, deployed in Stepankert, came under fire from artillery batteries. Ten soldiers were wounded, one of whom died of his injuries.

"We are always understanding toward the problems concerning the Republic of Azerbaijan and deeply feel the tragedy of Nagorno-Karabakh but the army has no part in it whatsoever," the note said.

Troops of the former Soviet army have vowed to stay out of regional conflicts but commanders and politicians on all sides worry they could be drawn into bloody ethnic warfare.

Azerbaijan and Armenia, both members of the Commonwealth of Independent States, are locked in a deadly struggle over Karabakh, a predominantly Armenian enclave administered by Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijani and Armenian forces battled for control of the Nagorno-Karabakh enclave Sunday and more than 20 people were killed in a missile attack, news agencies reported.

It was the largest death toll since the foreign ministers of the two countries agreed Thursday on the need for a ceasefire in the four-year-old conflict that has claimed more than 1,000 lives.

Vazgen Sargsyan, the defence minister of Armenia, said Azerbaijani militants launched a missile attack against the mainly Armenian area of Askeranky inside Nagorno-Karabakh, killing more than 20 people.

There were also reports of clashes in the Kubatlynsky region where Azerbaijani troops attacked a former Soviet army base.

The Interfax News Agency reported that late Friday night and early Saturday morning shooting continued in Nagorno-Karabakh and along the border regions with Armenia. The cities of Khodzha-li, Shusha and Naftalan were shelled and four people were killed in the shelling, Interfax reported.

Rockets continued to pound the city of Stepankert, the capital of Nagorno-Karabakh. The city has been heavily hit in recent fighting, and several fires were burning Saturday, Interfax reported.

Azerbaijan said Saturday that Armenian and Commonwealth forces had launched a major offensive across its western border, but Armenia and the Commonwealth military command flatly denied the accusation.

"The Azerbaijani leadership considers the full-scale attack along the Azerbaijani frontier as pure aggression, carried out with the support of the military leadership of the former USSR," the Azeri News Agency Turan quoted President Ayaz Mutalibov as saying.

But the Commonwealth general staff in Moscow told ITAR-TASS news agency that this was not true.

De Klerk: Disaster is alternative to reform

CAPE TOWN (Agencies) — South African President F.W. De Klerk, launching a lightning campaign for next month's whites-only vote on political reform, warned in Sunday newspaper interviews that disaster was the only alternative to democracy.

He told the biggest Afrikaans-language Sunday newspaper, Rapport, that his defeat would mean "a terrible crisis for South Africa... and isolation worse than anything we saw during the worst days of apartheid."

Asked by the top-selling Sunday Times what defeat would mean for the country, he said: "I think disaster."

But he said he expected a renewed white mandate for talks with blacks, including Nelson Mandela's African National Congress, on a transition from white rule to democracy.

"Most South Africans know in their bones we cannot turn back. That there is no other solution but a negotiated settlement which is inclusive of all South Africans," he said.

An aide said De Klerk would reveal the date and details of the referendum at a news conference in Cape Town Monday.

"He told me all the questions will be answered," he said.

De Klerk said Thursday, after his National Party (NP) was trounced in a by-election by the white-supremacist Conservative Party (CP), that he would hold a referendum before the end of March to test white support for reform.

"If I lose the referendum, I will resign, the government will resign and there will be an election," he said.

He told Rapport the poll was not a panic reaction to the 11 per cent swing to the right last week by voters in the Afrikaans constituency of Potchefstroom.

"Even before (Potchefstroom) there were signs that CP propaganda was beginning to slightly undermine my position at the negotiating table," he said.

"This is a fair way to decide the question: In whose hands do the people want to put negotiations about their future?"

The CP wants to carve the country into apartheid-style racial enclaves and has refused to join



F.W. De Klerk

talks — the first in the country's history — about an equal black vote.

National Party Secretary General Stoffel Van Der Merwe said CP demands for a say in the drafting of the question were "taken into account" when a government task group met Saturday to discuss the referendum.

"There is a draft text that was submitted to the president by the task group. It's in the president's hands... He will probably be getting in touch with the CP," Mr. Van Der Merwe said.

Meanwhile unidentified assailants hurled a grenade into a group of mourners after a funeral Saturday in the black township of Soweto, killing a woman and injuring at least four, police said.

The woman, who was not identified, died in a hospital after the afternoon attack, police spokesman Capt. G. Mariemuthoo said. Four other people were injured in the attack, Capt. Mariemuthoo added.

The African National Congress (ANC) said 10 people were injured, in addition to the woman who died, and that the assailants also fired automatic rifles, Capt. Mariemuthoo could not confirm that report.

The victims had been at a funeral for an ANC supporter killed on Feb. 16 in clashes involving the ANC and its rival Inkatha Freedom Party. Thousands of people have died in the fighting, which has raged in black township since the mid-1980s.

Sri Lanka rebel leader urges political settlement

COLOMBO (R) — Sri Lanka's Tamil rebel chief has called in a rare interview for a U.N.-mediated political settlement to the island's nine-year ethnic conflict.

Velpillai Prabhakaran also warned the government not to attempt a large-scale invasion of the rebel stronghold in Jaffna peninsula in northern Sri Lanka.

Mr. Prabhakaran leads the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam which have fought since 1983 for a homeland called Eelam for Sri Lanka's minority Tamil community. Thousands have died in the fighting.

Calling for a settlement under U.N. auspices, he told the independent Sunday Island newspaper an offensive "would motivate us towards permanent separation as our main objective in the past was Tamil Eelam."

The military has denied planning any offensive to take over the Jaffna peninsula, but residents say large numbers of troops and tanks have gone to northern camps in preparation for battle.

In recent months, the rebels have indicated an interest in a negotiated settlement to the conflict through the establishment of an autonomous administration in the north and east of the island.

The interview with Mr. Prabhakaran — only his second in the past two years — took place on Jan. 26 and was published Sunday.

Referring to food shortages in the peninsula, Mr. Prabhakaran said economic strangulation was the last resort of a weak enemy.

"By starving our people... it is an attempt to weaken their resistance and determination to fight. Our people have an inexhaustible thirst for liberation and will not yield to the pangs of hunger."

The government says there is sufficient food in the peninsula. But journalists who recently visited Jaffna said there were acute shortages and people were struggling to cope.

The Sri Lankan Armed Forces said Sunday they would declare a curfew from Monday until further notice in northern and northwestern areas dominated by Tamil rebels.

No reasons were given for the move but residents said it was possible the army was planning anti-rebel operations in those areas.

Last week, the army shelled rebel positions in the Jaffna peninsula during a four-day curfew there.

Pakistani, Indian troops clash in Kashmir

ISLAMABAD (R) — Pakistani troops traded fire with Indian forces in disputed Kashmir in a clash prompted by two civilians near the ceasefire line, a Pakistani army spokesman said Sunday.

India said its soldiers fired Saturday at two people attempting to cross the U.N.-monitored line of control from the Pakistani side after they ignored warning shots.

One person was killed and the other injured, Indian press re-

ports said.

A Pakistan army spokesman said two people had been grazing sheep close to the border when Indian troops opened fire on them.

"Nobody tried to cross the line of control. They (Indians) fired at our people which was replied (to) appropriately," he said.

The spokesman said the situation was brought under control after a meeting between local commanders.

Tensions have been high since early this month when a militant Kashmiri group attempted to storm the border from the Pakistani side to express its solidarity with militants fighting Delhi's rule over Indian-controlled Kashmir.

At least seven people were killed in clashes with Pakistani security forces on Feb. 12 when the marchers were stopped before reaching the Indian-defended ceasefire line.

Democrats hopeful as Romania votes

BUCHAREST (R) — Romanians wrapped themselves up in warm clothes Sunday and went to vote in the second round of local elections that could mark a new advance for opposition Democrats against the ruling National Salvation Front (NSF).

Voting started in freezing weather, with a chill wind ruffling the flags on polling stations. In the Transylvanian region of Harghita the temperature reached minus 22 degrees Celsius and people lit bonfires outside the polling stations, Bucharest Radio said.

The outcome is expected to reflect the extent to which Romania has embraced democracy since the December 1989 fall of the hardline Communist regime headed by the late dictator Nicolae Ceausescu.

The NSF, which came to power in a bloody revolution, counts many former Communists among its leaders.

The main rivals for posts in local administration are the NSF and the 14-party centrist Democratic Convention (DC).

"I'm sure we will win both in Bucharest and most of the cities across the country and that would mean the end of one-party rule," Crin Halicu, the DC candidate for mayor-general of Bucharest, told Reuters after voting.

The outcome in more than half of Romania's constituencies after the first round on Feb. 9 was inconclusive, forcing an extensive runoff ballot including the capital, Bucharest.

Results from the second round are due later in the week.

Early turnout Sunday was low and voting proceeded calmly in all constituencies. In Bucharest, only eight per cent of the 1.6 million voters have cast ballots by 11 a.m. (0900 GMT).

Some 1,542 constituencies, including Bucharest and 37 major cities, opened polling stations at 6 a.m. local time (0400 GMT).

Most Irish want wide abortion ban lifted

DUBLIN (R) — A majority of Irish people want to scrap the Roman Catholic country's blanket ban on abortion, an opinion poll showed Sunday amid a future over a ruling which stopped a rape teenager having her pregnancy ended in Britain.

Two out of three questioned in the Sunday Independent newspaper survey thought the Dublin High Court was wrong to end the 14-year-old ban from flying to England for an abortion.

After a bitterly divisive campaign in 1983, the Irish decided by a 2-1 majority to amend the constitution to protect the rights of the unborn child.

The Sunday poll showed that public opinion had now been almost exactly reversed in this conservative country where abortion and divorce are illegal, homosexuality is outlawed and you have to be 18 to buy a condom in a chemist shop.

Sixty-six per cent said they supported changing the constitution to allow abortion under limited and clearly defined conditions. Sixty-four per cent disagreed with the High Court.

The parents of the girl, who was raped by the father of her best friend, are taking the case to the Supreme Court Monday with the \$50,000 punt (\$80,000) costs paid by the state.

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

Most Germans do not want Honecker back

BONN (R) — A majority of Germans do not want former east German Communist leader Erich Honecker returned to stand trial on manslaughter charges, a newspaper said. "Fifty-seven per cent of all Germans no longer insist the former east German leader should be sent back," the Süddeutsche Zeitung reported. "After reports that Honecker's health is getting worse, a clear majority is saying for the first time that the politician should not necessarily go before a court." But it said half the people in eastern Germany did want him returned to Germany, where he faces charges stemming from his government's orders to shoot people fleeing to the West. Honecker, 79, escaped to Moscow after Germany united in 1990 and sought refuge in the Chilean embassy last December after Russia decided to expel him to Germany. His wife says he has liver cancer and kidney trouble.

Support for Miyazawa sinks to new low

TOKYO (R) — Popular support for Japanese Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa, whose government is mired in scandal, has fallen to a new low, newspapers reported Sunday. A Jiji Press opinion poll carried by several major Tokyo papers found that support for Mr. Miyazawa's government this month had dropped to 25.9 per cent, down about 12 points from the previous month. Fifty per cent said they strongly opposed Mr. Miyazawa, up from some 35 per cent last month, mainly because of a rash of scandals plaguing the government and the ruling party. Support for the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) fell seven points to 32 per cent, according to the poll. Mr. Miyazawa's government is growing weaker under an almost daily barrage of scandal revelations.

Ship fire kills 2 U.S. sailors

WASHINGTON (R) — An engine-room fire aboard the guided missile destroyer USS Dahlgren killed two sailors off the South Carolina coast, the U.S. Defence Department said. Four other sailors suffered from minor smoke inhalation in the 20-minute blaze, said Pentagon spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Steve Titunik. The Dahlgren was returning to the Norfolk, Virginia, naval base after the fire, which began shortly after 8 a.m. est (1300 GMT), was extinguished. The two sailors killed in the blaze died of smoke inhalation. The 30-year-old vessel had been conducting routine operations about 240 miles off Charleston, South Carolina, he said.

Papandreou expels 3 MPs from party

ATHENS (AP) — Former Premier Andreas Papandreou has expelled three members of parliament who openly questioned his leadership of the main opposition Socialist Party. "They no longer belong to the Panhellenic Socialist Movement's parliamentary group. Let them continue their way outside Pasok," Mr. Papandreou said in a statement. The three — Vasillis Kedikoglou, Ilias Papadopoulos and Haris Kastanidis — had issued separate calls over the past few months for Mr. Papandreou to name a successor.

Gorbachev to visit Germany in March

MOSCOW (AP) — Mikhail Gorbachev plans to visit Germany in March on his first foreign trip since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Commonwealth television has reported. The former Soviet president is expected to travel to Germany on March 4 at the invitation of the giant German publishing concern, Bertelsmann AG, television said. Mr. Gorbachev ruled the Soviet Union from 1985 to its demise in late 1991. His efforts to reform the country led to the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union as well as the end of the cold war.

Aquino defends Ramos as successor

CEBU, Philippines (R) — Philippine President Corazon Aquino Sunday brushed aside church criticism and defended former defence chief Fidel Ramos as the best candidate to succeed her. "I firmly believe that Ramos is the rightful candidate to carry on with my programme of government," Mrs. Aquino told a crowd of 1,500 people in the central province of Cebu. Mrs. Aquino is not standing for re-election at the May national elections and has endorsed the candidacy of Ramos, a former army general who helped quell six coup attempts against her. Cardinal Jaime Sin, the country's most influential churchman, has criticised Mrs. Aquino's decision, saying Gen. Ramos was a turncoat who helped prop up the dictatorship of the late President Ferdinand Marcos.

Bush popularity sinks further; Democrats prefer Clinton — polls

WASHINGTON (R) — U.S. President George Bush's popularity has fallen to the lowest level of his presidency and is well under 50 per cent for the first time, two national polls released this weekend showed.

The polls also suggested that Democrats as a whole lean toward Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton as their nominee to challenge Bush in November over New Hampshire primary election winner Pat Tsongas.

Mr. Bush's popularity among Americans has fallen to 42 per cent, about half its level a year ago, a CNN/Time poll released Saturday showed.

A Newsweek poll showed his popularity had sunk to the same 42 per cent, the first time it had dropped below 50 per cent. Fifty-one per cent of respondents said they did not approve of the way he was handling his job.

The Newsweek poll released Saturday also showed that only 44 per cent of Americans think Mr. Bush is very likely to be re-elected in November.

His weak spot is the economy, the poll suggested. Of those polled, 73 per cent thought he was not doing enough to help the

U.S. economy.

Mr. Clinton, now campaigning in the south, scored support from 34 per cent of registered Democrats and Democratic-leaning independent voters polled Thursday, the CNN/Time poll said.

That was nine percentage points ahead of Mr. Tsongas, a former Massachusetts senator who won in New Hampshire last Sunday after charges of adultery and draft dodging stung Mr. Clinton.

The Newsweek poll, conducted Thursday and Friday, showed that 33 per cent of respondents said Mr. Clinton "appeals to me," compared to 31 per cent for Mr. Tsongas, while 44 per cent thought Mr. Clinton could be elected compared to 38 per cent for Mr. Tsongas.

Mr. Bush, taking to heart the message from recession-weary voters, went on the offensive Saturday by pushing his economic growth plan and accusing Democrats of dragging their feet at the expense of American jobs.

"My plan will create jobs," Mr. Bush said in a radio address. Almost 3 million jobs have been lost during the past 19 months.

Mr. Bush, in his radio address, urged voters to tell the Democrat-controlled Congress to "stop fooling with the future" and to act now on his new economic programme.

U.S. administration is intensifying its campaigning after Mr. Bush emerged as a bleeding victor in last week's New Hampshire Republican presidential primary.

Conservative columnist Patrick Buchanan won a surprising 37 per cent of New Hampshire's Republican voters.

Mr. Buchanan, campaigning in the southeastern state of Florida, said Mr. Bush's most recent speeches revealed post-primary jitters.

"He's sounding more like Pat Buchanan every day," said the columnist. "If only he had governed like Pat Buchanan for the last three years, we wouldn't be here."

Mr. Bush and Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady appeared to heed the message.

Both gave addresses Saturday that stressed how Mr. Bush's economic package of tax breaks for families, first-time home buyers and entrepreneurs would

create jobs and prosperity.

Meanwhile, Vice President Dan Quayle was busy repairing relations with the party's right wing after Mr. Buchanan took some of that support away.

Mr. Quayle said nightwing Republicans must stop casting protest votes to display their economic discontent and instead rally around the true cause — keeping control of the White House.

"What I'm telling conservatives is we've got to get beyond sending messages and start getting serious about re-electing President George Bush," Mr. Quayle said in an interview on Cable News Network's "Evans and Novak" programme.

The rally-round-the-president call and the onslaught on economic plans showed just how rattled the once-indomitable president was over his re-election chances, said Steve Moore, a researcher at the Cato Institute, a libertarian Washington policy group.

"You are seeing panic in the White House," said Mr. Moore. "Basically Bush is worried that he is losing the base of his party — the right wing."

While Mr. Bush and his top officials were painting the presi-

dent as the country's saviour, top Democratic candidates campaigning in Georgia addressed international rather than economic themes.

Campaigning in Georgia Mr. Tsongas, the Democratic front-runner after winning his party's primary in New Hampshire, said the United States should sever economic ties with South Africa if the white minority there throws out President F.W. De Klerk, who is dismantling apartheid.

Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton, running hard to regain pre-eminence in the Democratic race, told black college students in Atlanta that Washington "has to be firmly on the side of freedom in South Africa."

But he took a wait-and-see approach to Washington's response if Mr. De Klerk, who was dealt a stinging rebuff in a parliamentary by-election last week, is ousted.

Georgia hosts the first primary in the south on March 3. Because of its large black population, racial issues are likely to play a stronger role there. Mr. Clinton, as a southern governor who has won black votes, hopes for a strong showing there.

COLUMN 1800001

Japanese prince turns 32

TOKYO (R) — "Desperately seeking: Intelligent woman with impeccable background and breeding, suitable for marriage to the Japanese crown prince." Headlines like this in Japanese newspapers and magazines, a common sight until recently, underlined the lack of success in finding a bride for crown Prince Naruhito, who turned 32 Sunday.

Now they have vanished along with most media reports on Prince Naruhito's love life, or lack of it, after the Imperial Household Agency, the August Institution running the palace, joined the search for a consort-to-be. Fearful of frightening away candidates — no one is exactly lining up at the palace gate — the agency recently put pressure on the country's main newspaper and broadcasters not to report on any aspect of its attempts to play matchmaker over the next three months. "We want to protect the privacy of any of candidates that the agency may approach in the next several months," explained a palace official. "Reporters tend to go to extremes, seeking out anyone whose name is linked to that of the crown prince and even speculating on the possible shortcomings of his highest himself."

Every detail of Prince Naruhito's life — his hair style, manner of dress and who he meets — has been the subject of intense debate in even the most serious of newspapers. All possible candidates among daughters of prominent families have been hounded by bride-watchers eager for any whiff of imperial romance.

Balloonists postpone round-world bid

NEW YORK (R) — An attempt to make the first non-stop trip around the world in a hot-air balloon, with the next attempt to be made in November, organisers said in a statement. Organisers of the Earthwind Expedition said high winds had made a launch of the hourglass-shaped double balloon from a base in Akron, Ohio, dangerous. The \$5 million craft with its three-man U.S.-Russian crew had been scheduled to launch early Saturday. "Based on what we saw on the launch field Friday night and weather analysis for the future, we have concluded that the prospects for finding suitable weather for the balance of this season are non-existent," the statement said. The assault on one of aviation's last remaining records had been repeatedly delayed since early January by uncooperative weather. "Our attempt to circumnavigate the earth non-stop by balloon will resume in November 1992," the statement said. "Meteorological analysis indicated that our launch window generally extended from November through February."

Tombs gets his date with Witt, four years later

LES MENUIRES (R) — Alberto Tomba waited four years before finally getting a date with skating queen Katarina Witt at the Winter Olympics. Tomba, Italy's master of the slalom slopes, took the German skater skiing at Les Menuires, the day before defending the slalom title he won at the Calgary Olympics in 1988. Play-boy Tomba tried but failed to get a date with